TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

SCIENTIA LUMEN VITAE

LIBRARY

DENTON

TEXAS

wD

3 9351 004710044

S

848
M352mP

Date Due

BRODART Printed in U.S.A.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/memoirsofmarmont0000brig

MARMONTEL
MEMOIRS

BROADWAY LIBRARY OF
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY
FRENCH LITERATURE

THE BROADWAY LIBRARY OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH LITERATURE

EDITED BY RICHARD ALDINGTON
WITH A GENERAL INTRODUCTION
BY SIR EDMUND GOSSE

DIALOGUES OF DENIS DIDEROT.
Translated by Francis Birrell

THE SOFA: A MORAL TALE. *By* Crébillon Fils.
Translated by Bonamy Dobrée

LETTERS OF VOLTAIRE AND FREDERICK THE GREAT.
Translated by Richard Aldington

MEMOIRS OF THE BASTILLE. *By* Latude *and* Linguet.
Translated by J. and S. M. Mills Whitham

MEMOIRS OF THE PRINCE DE LIGNE.
Translated by Leigh Ashton

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE DUC DE RICHELIEU.
Translated by F. S. Flint

SHORT STORIES BY CRÉBILLON FILS, ABBÉ DE VOISENON, AND MONTESQUIEU.
Translated by Mrs. Wilfrid Jackson

THE REVERIES OF A SOLITARY. *By* J. J. Rousseau.
Translated by John Gould Fletcher

PENSÉES AND LETTERS OF JOUBERT.
Translated by H. P. Collins

MEMOIRS OF THE DUC DE LAUZUN.
Translated by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff

MEMOIRS OF MADAME DE POMPADOUR.
By her waiting-woman, Madame du Hausset.
Translated by F. S. Flint

MEMOIRS OF A NUN. By Denis Diderot.
Translated by Francis Birrell

LOVE LETTERS OF MLLE DE LESPINASSE.
Translated by E. H. F. Mills

ADVENTURES OF ZÉLOIDE. *By* Paradis de Moncrif.
Translated by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff

THE PICTURE OF PARIS. *By* L. S. Mercier.
Translated by Wilfrid *and* Mrs. Jackson

MEMOIRS OF MADAME D'EPINAY.
Translated by Mrs. E. G. Allingham.

ADVENTURES OF A MAN OF QUALITY.
By the Abbé Prévost. *Translated by* Mysie E. I. Robertson

MEMOIRS OF MARMONTEL.
Translated by Brigit Patmore

The above volumes are ready or nearing publication.
A complete list will be found at the end of this volume

Published by
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.

THE BROADWAY LIBRARY
OF XVIII CENTURY FRENCH LITERATURE

MEMOIRS OF MARMONTEL

Translated by Brigit Patmore

With Sainte-Beuve's Essay on Marmontel

Published by

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.
BROADWAY HOUSE, CARTER LANE, LONDON

MEZZANINE

First published in 1930

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
BILLING AND SONS LTD., GUILDFORD AND ESHER

ESSAY ON MARMONTEL

By C. A. SAINTE-BEUVE

(*From the "Causeries du Lundi"*)

NOTHING is more painful to me than to see the disdain with which commendable and distinguished writers of the second rank are often treated, as if there were no room except for those of the first. What we should do in the case of those writers who were so highly esteemed in their day and are now antiquated is to reconsider their claims and to cut off their dead part, taking away only that which deserves to survive. Posterity appears to me more and more like a hurried traveller who is packing his trunk, and cannot find room for more than a small number of chosen volumes. Critic, you who have the honour of being for the posterity of the moment a nomenclator, a secretary, and, if possible, a confidential librarian, tell him quickly the titles of those volumes which deserve to be remembered and read; hasten, the train is getting ready to start, the engine is getting up steam, the smoke is rising, our traveller has but a moment. You have mentioned Marmontel: but what work of Marmontel do you recommend? I do not hesitate, and I say: The "Memoirs," nothing but the "Memoirs." But, in saying this, I insist that at every new departure they shall never be forgotten.

Marmontel stands in the first rank among the good littérateurs of the eighteenth century; senior to La Harpe by fifteen or sixteen years, he deserves as much, and more than La Harpe, to be called Voltaire's first pupil in all branches. He was talented and hard-working, flexible, easy, active, abundant, much too

66001

MEZZANINE

satisfied with the approximate in the order of poetry and art, introducing false notes, but full of resources and ideas, and employing elegant and precise expression in all that was merely literary labour; moreover, an excellent story-teller, not so much in his "Tales" proper as in the telling of those anecdotes which come under his pen in his "Memoirs"; an excellent painter of society portraits, knowing and reproducing with wonderful skill the world of his time, with an optimistic colouring which does not exclude shrewdness and does not mar the resemblance. In short Marmontel, with his weaknesses and a character which was neither strongly tempered nor very elevated, was an honest man, what we call a good nature, unspoiled by the life of the century, the easy morals and the literary coteries into which he had drifted more than any other. He had acquired neither the bitterness of some, nor the glaring arrogance of others; in spite of some petulance and even irascibility, he cherished no evil passion. His conduct at the epoch of the Revolution, and in the difficult circumstances in which so many others of his colleagues (and La Harpe in the first place) covered themselves with ridicule and disgrace, was dignified, prudent, even generous. So, when it became known that this good old Marmontel had just died in the cottage to which he had retired, in the hamlet of Abloville near Gaillon in Normandy, on December 31, 1799, the last day of the century, this death aroused everywhere a feeling of esteem and regret.

It was in this last retreat that he wrote his most pleasing and most enduring work, his "Memoirs": "It is for my children that I write the story of my life, he says at the beginning; their mother wished it." There are many things in it that we are surprised that he should have written for his children and at his wife's solicitation; but this only illustrates another characteristic feature of the morals of the time, and the general tone of bonhomie and naturalness which prevails in the whole work is its passport.

Marmontel was between seventy-six and seventy-seven years of age when he died, having been born on July 11, 1723, at Bort in Limousin. This pretty little town of Bort, lying in a valley, is commanded by some symmetrically disposed volcanic rocks, which, when the wind blows, give out a strange, harmonious sound, and which for that reason have been called the *organ of Bort.* Marmontel describes with expansiveness, and freshness the pleasant cradle of his childhood. In the first pages, when picturing his modest, united and happy family (he was, I think, the son of a tailor), the good priest who teaches him Latin, the Abbé Vaissière; the first comrade and friend of his heart whom he takes for his model, the wise Durant; when introducing us to his mother, charming and mentally distinguished in her obscure condition, to his father with his good sense and severer tenderness, to his aunts and sisters, we seem to breathe an odour of good morals and good sentiments which will cling to him, and which he will never lose, even in the boudoirs where afterwards he forgets his origin. We see the first beginnings of a quick, facile, rather richly endowed and very malleable nature, a very *natural* nature, if I may say so, open, frank, rather proud without conceit, without any gall and without any bad leaven. I know of no prettier picture of home life than that which he draws of this patriarchal family and its fire-side joys:

"Add to the household three sisters of my grandmother, and my mother's sister, that surviving aunt; in the midst of these women and a crowd of children, my father was the only man; all this family had very little to live on. Order, economy, labour, a little trading, and above all frugality, kept us in a state of comfort. The little garden produced almost enough vegetables for the needs of the house; the close gave us fruit, and our quinces, our apples, our pears, preserved in the honey of our bees, afforded us children and the good old ladies the most exquisite breakfasts in the winter. The herd of the sheepfold of St. Thomas clothed with its wool now the women and now the children; my aunts would spin it; they spun also the hemp of the field which provided us with linen; and the evening gatherings of young people of the neighbourhood who came to help us to strip this fine hemp, by the light of the lamp fed with the oil of our walnut trees, presented a charming picture. The grain-crops of our little farm assured us a living: the wax and the honey of our bees, which one of my aunts reared with care, were a source of profit and little expense; the oil pressed out of our fresh walnuts had a flavour and a perfume that we preferred to that of the olive. Our buckwheat cakes (called *tourtous* in the language of the country), soaked, burning hot, in that good butter of the Mont-Dor, were to us the daintiest of treats. No dish that I know of could have pleased us better than our turnips and our chestnuts; and on winter evenings, when these beautiful turnips were grilling around the hearth, or when we heard the simmering of the pot in which these sweet and savoury chestnuts were cooking, our hearts leaped with joy. I can also remember the scent proceeding from a fine quince that was roasting under the ashes, and the pleasure which our grandmother took in dividing it among us. *The soberest of women made gourmands of us all.*"

This last touch is truer of Marmontel than he appears to believe when he tells us of it with a smile. It is remarkable how in his narrative, whatever its nature may be, he never forgets the details of the table, the champagne or the flask of Tokay which enlivened the end of the most witty repast. If the suppers at M. de La Popelinière's at Passy or at the head clerk's at Versailles appeared to him *ample*, he does not forget that that was not so with Mme. Geoffrin's more delicate suppers, and that their good cheer was *succinct*. He remembers even the menu of his first dinner in the Bastille, and his ordinary, which, thanks to the Governor, was as copious as it was succulent; and Vaucluse still commended itself thirty years afterwards to his memory by the after-taste of the fine crayfish and the excellent trout he had eaten there, no less than by the platonic reminiscences of Petrarch. It is true that at his rising in the morning, during his happy visits to the country, Marmontel is equally ready to appreciate an *ample bowl of frothy milk*. The only inference I wish to draw from these details which on every occasion season the pleasing parts of Marmontel's "Memoirs," is that he was naturally a little sensual, and that he shows it, without any prejudice, however, to the interest of his narrative, so that the reader will say to himself as he follows his story: "The good man sometimes embellishes the past with too easy colours, but after all he exhibits himself with naïveté and in his true nature; he does not lie."

Little is wanting in these first books of Marmontel's "Memoirs" to make them masterpieces of narrative and of familiar and domestic painting. Unfortunately a few false touches of the brush too often cross the simple tones and spoil the impression. Speaking of the father of his good comrade Durant, a field-labourer in a neighbouring village, who welcomed him with pleasure on the days when the two friends went out walking together. "How he entertained us, that good white-haired old man!" he exclaims; "the good cream, the good milk, the good black bread that he gave us! and what happy omens he was pleased to see in my respect for his old age! *Why cannot I go and sow flowers on his grave!*" Do you feel how this latter touch, which is quite academic, quite literary, and an imitation of Gessner's unreal style, spoils the preceding picture? It is a relapse into the style of the "Moral Tales." Marmontel has not that severe good taste which warns us to stop in time and to keep to nature. It was, on the other hand, the glory of Jean-Jacques' brush in his "Confessions" that he expressed nothing that was not true and really felt, and that he remained firm and sober even in the splendours of his description and in his tenderness.

Nothing is more pleasing, however, than these first pages of Marmontel. He continues his studies at the Jesuits' College at Mauriac; he describes his masters, his school-fellows; he makes us feel and sympathise with his privations, his schoolboy's joy, his triumphs. He lived with four or five comrades at the house of an artisan in the town; each had with him his store of provisions for the week, the supplies sent from the paternal roof: "Our *bourgeoise* cooked for us, and for her trouble, her fire, her lamp, her beds, her lodging, and even the vegetables of her little garden that she put into the pot, we paid her each *twenty-five sous a month;* so that, everything included, except my clothing, I might have cost my father four or five louis a year. That was much for him." On fête-days one of the more favoured of the scholars would receive some dainty morsel; on those days the feast was shared in common, and by a delicate attention, in order not to grieve the poorer ones, the boy who had been favoured by the reception of the dainties was not mentioned: "When one of these presents arrived, the *bourgeoise* announced it to us: but she was forbidden to say who had received it, and the recipient himself would have been ashamed of boasting of it. This discretion excited my mother's admiration, when

I told her of it." One sees the tone and the strong family feeling animating all these first pages. Marmontel had a brilliant school career, and was almost always the first in his class: "My good mother was delighted. When my dimity vests were sent back to her, she would quickly look to see if the silver chain that held the cross had blackened my buttonhole; and, when she saw this mark of my triumph, all the mothers in the neighbourhood were told of her joy; our good nuns gave thanks to Heaven; my dear Abbé Vaissière beamed with pride." We see here the true signs of a tender and pious filial feeling, a native honesty that we never find in Rousseau, who was in many respects so superior. However, the future littérateur, soon to be the friend of the philosophers, already announced himself by a few acts of boldness and a few weaknesses. In the third class, Marmontel, as head boy, became the censor and superintendent of his class-fellows, and determined to gain their favour and aspire to popularity. "I made it a rule," he says, "to mitigate the censure; and, in the absence of the master, during the half-hour when I was alone in charge, I began by allowing a reasonable amount of liberty: they talked, laughed, amused themselves quietly, and my report said nothing about it. This indulgence, which made me liked, became every day more relaxed. Liberty was succeeded by licence, and I suffered it; I did more, I encouraged it, so attractive was the public favour to me!" In short, it ended in his permitting one of his class-mates, who was reputed the best dancer of the *bourrée* in Auvergne, to dance it in the middle of the class-room. One should read in the work itself about the series of tribulations which followed this piece of factious complaisance.

One day in the Rhetoric class he was unjustly threatened with a flogging. But, just or not, what did it matter? to flog a Rhetorician, that was the enormity, the infamy. Marmontel, escaping from the room of the odious prefect of studies, rushes back to the class-room; he harangues his comrades, he embraces the altar; one should read the speech, a happy parody of those which Livy's Romans delivered on withdrawing to Mount Aventinus. With his peroration he carries away the whole Rhetoric class, who, having only a month more of school before the vacation, take upon themselves to cut it short and announce the school year to be closed a month sooner, and to withdraw in a body and in good order with the honours of the war. The furious prefect, not daring to attack the sacred battalion, contented himself with regarding Marmontel with a threatening eye: "He predicted that I should be the leader of a faction. He knew me ill: so his prediction was not fulfilled," adds the excellent man who, wiser and matured by experience, desired no popularity in '89.

It will be remarked that in his "Memoirs" Marmontel is rather fond of quoting his speeches, of recalling those he made in certain circumstances, and recomposing them; but he is not always equally successful: to be that he has to bring in, as in the just-mentioned case, a touch of parody and humour. When he takes himself quite seriously and openly aims at being pathetic, he fails. Thus, when in January, 1760, on leaving the Bastille, where he had been detained eleven days for reciting in society a satire against the Duc d'Aumont, he calls upon the Minister, the Duc de Choiseul, and tries to move him to obtain the continuation of the privilege to publish the *Mercure*, with which he supports his family, his aunts, his sisters, the speech he supposes himself to have delivered on this occasion, and which he recomposes from memory, is artificial and almost ridiculous: "Know, Monsieur le Duc, that at the age of sixteen, having lost my father, and seeing myself surrounded by orphans like myself and a poor and numerous family, I promised to be a father to them all. *I take Heaven and nature to witness. . . . Ah! it is there that the Duc d'Aumont will have to go to taste the fruits of his vengeance; it is there that he will hear their cries and see their tears flow. Let him go there and count his victims and those he has made unfortunate; let him go there and get his fill of tears*, etc." We have the amplification in its completeness, and an amplification which, this time, is not even excused by the smile of the author. Marmontel had felt himself eloquent at the moment of speaking to M. de Choiseul, and he thought he was again eloquent when giving from memory what he called a *slight sketch* of his former speech, whilst he was only giving a caricature. There is his mistake; and it is because he has not a sufficiently sure taste for discerning these shades at the moment that Marmontel is not a true artist, nor even a critic of the first rank. But this shall not be a reason for our denying him the abundant natural and pleasing qualities which he manifests at the same time.

As a rule, without falling as much as many of his contemporaries into the bad taste of the century, Marmontel shares in and does not resist it. He himself or the persons he brings on the stage are fond of speaking of nature; their eyes are quick to become moist ("*I who weep easily*," he says), they rush effusively into each other's arms, they water their embraces with tears. Marmontel is rather fond of this kind of dramatic phraseology, even when he is only recounting scenes of real life. Somebody said rightly that if Marmontel, when he is good, leads to Ducis, when he is bad he approaches Bouilly.

The first book of his "Memoirs" is, however, very well composed. This happy book, which contains the story of his childhood, of his family, of his first schooling, and even of his first love affairs, ends with the abrupt news of his father's death—that is to say, with the first great grief that initiates him into the seriousness of life.

In the second, Marmontel, who has done his Philosophy course at Clermond-Ferrand and now wears the ecclesiastical habit, is thinking of taking the tonsure at Limoges. Having been tonsured, he seeks a career; he is almost induced to join the Jesuits at Toulouse, who had marked him and would have liked him to be one of themselves. During this uncertainty and these wavering plans of his youth, he travels about the country, and every Curé's niece he meets in his wanderings is compared with a Correggio Virgin. One of my friends who knows his Limousin thoroughly tells me that if the nieces of the Curés and the young girls of that province in general are fresh and pretty, they have anything but that Correggio-like appearance or that rose-coloured manner of speaking. Marmontel lends the same graces to the daughter of a muleteer at Aurillac who has offered him hospitality for a few days: he describes her arm as *kneaded with lilies*, " and the little one sees of her neck is white as ivory." This vein of sensuality does not go further than it should at that time in this honest nature; but I notice above all his habit of seeing things a little differently from what they are, of painting them with a certain indulgent and softened colouring which is not their right colour; I observe, in a word, that disposition of the author to *Marmontelise* nature.

However, whilst he is at Toulouse, Marmontel, whose activity and talent are seeking an outlet in all directions, competes for the Jeux Floraux; he fails to win the prize the first time, and, in his vexation, he writes to Voltaire and sends him his work; he appeals to him as the sovereign arbiter of poetry. Voltaire replies. Once in correspondence with the great man, we can understand Marmontel's taking a dislike to the priest's bands, to the ecclesiastical career, and starting on a certain day for Paris on the faith of a promise and a hope. He was twenty-two years of age.

He was to be placed, through Voltaire's patronage, with M. Orri, Controller-General of Finances; he arrives, but M. Orri has just been disgraced (December, 1745): our young friend is thrown back on his pen and his courage. Behold Marmontel, then, in the situation that we have all experienced, lodged in the Rue des Maçons-Sorbonne, and afterwards in the Petite Rue de Paon, frequenting the Café Procope, living on credit, looking for a publisher, composing a fine tragedy for the coming winter, and meanwhile editing, with a friend, a little journal (*L'Observateur*). He had at this first start in life a piece of good fortune which influenced his whole life. At Voltaire's house he met Vauvenargues, who, already marked by death, had come to live in Paris: Marmontel lived opposite to him, waited on him, talked with him, gathered instruction from him, and in his heart, too mobile, too subject to surrounding influences, but fundamentally honest and upright, he treasured to the last and in spite of all the philters that bewildered him, a taste for that sound and pure philosophy which Vauvenargues' eloquence had poured into it.

Marmontel made his début with tragedies: would you believe it? he had some successes. He appeared made for this branch of literature. Voltaire always regretted that he gave it up so soon. Collé, a severe critic, wrote in 1758 these words of which, by the way, he afterwards repented: "I think he has a decided talent for tragedy." Marmontel's two first tragedies, "Denys le Tyran," played in February, 1748, and "Aristomène," played in April, 1749, created a furore. The author was dragged in triumph on to the stage.

He became the fashion from the first day; the pompous financiers who piqued themselves on their good taste, like M. de La Popelinière, would not let him out of their drawing-rooms, and the women who piqued themselves on their love of fame, like Mlle. Navarre, instantly desired him in their alcoves.

Who was this Mlle. Navarre? Go to Marmontel and question this third book of his "Memoirs," which is so to say his fourth book of the "Æneid," but in which there is more than one Dido. Mlle. Navarre, daughter of M. Navarre, Receiver of the Tailles at Soissons, was, as we are told by a man who was not in love with her (Grosley), the most brilliant match of her family; she aimed at something great, something extraordinary, and won the love of the Maréchal de Saxe: "Beauty, graces, talents, a delicate wit, a tender heart, called her to this brilliant conquest. . . . Her conversation was delightful."[1] Marmontel shows her besides as fickle, capricious, with more brilliancy even than beauty: "Dressed as a Pole, in the most gallant manner, two long tresses floated over her shoulders; and some *jonquils* on her head, mingling with her hair, marvellously heightened the brilliancy of that beautiful brunette complexion which was animated by the fire of two sparkling eyes." It was this amazon, this beautiful warrior who, sacrificing the illustrious Marshal to the young poet, one morning carried Marmontel away from his Parisian societies and transported him with a touch of her wand to her solitude at Aveney, where she kept him imprisoned for several months among the vines of Champagne as on a Calypso's Island. The most unfortunate of happy lovers, Marmontel tells in a piquant manner of some of the insane extravagances with which she kept him perpetually amused in this *tête-à-tête* that she was especially afraid might become monotonous. Dropped as abruptly as he had been taken up, he then allows us to witness his troubles, his affliction and his consolation, which soon followed; it came to him in the shape of the celebrated actress Mlle. Clairon, who was of his own age and who contributed to the success of his plays.

---

[1] "Life of Grosley," written by himself, continued and published by the Abbé Maydieu (1787); on pages 95-99 may be found some additional details concerning Mlle. Navarre.

Another distraction of Marmontel's at this time (for he had many) was for another young and pretty actress, Mlle. Verrière, who had also belonged to the Maréchal de Saxe: she had had a daughter by him, since acknowledged, *Aurore de Saxe*, who is no other, I think, than the grandmother of Mme. Sand. By treading so often in the Marshal's footsteps, Marmontel at last roused his anger. "This insolent little poet is carrying off all my mistresses," grumbled the illustrious warrior. Aurore de Saxe was within an ace of being immediately disowned, disinherited and *Marmontelised*.

These dissipations, those he found at Passy, whither he had gone to reside with his Mæcenas M. de La Popelinière, this life of suppers and pleasures, arrested Marmontel's first successes and his tragic soarings, supposing he had been strong enough to push his way in that direction. His "Cléopâtre," for which Vaucanson had provided the asp, and which lent itself to so many epigrams, had only a semi-success, eleven performances; "Les Hèraclides" died at the sixth. "Les Funérailles de Sésostris" fell flat. Thus, out of five plays performed two were great successes, two were semi-failures and one a complete rout, that is his tragic career. Later he recovered on the stage, in lyric tragedy with Piccini, and with Grétry in comic opera. He wrote "Zémire et Azor" and "Didon." Those are his revenges; and we cannot understand his being seized with the desire at sixty to produce some tragedy or other called "Numitor," which remained in his portfolio.

"Numitor!" how could a man of culture, of talent and good sense have had such an idea and dwelt upon it for a moment?

For our part, to speak candidly, in a branch of literature as unreal as was the tragic drama of that period, we should find it impossible, if we were not guided by results, to express any preference for one or the other of those five or six tragedies; our attention when reading them is at once so much paralysed by their insipidity and tediousness that we cannot form any opinion that would differentiate and distinguish them. Of how many other tragedies could we not say the same thing, if we dared!

Marmontel's failures were a lesson to him. Marmontel is modest and does not think too highly of himself. Speaking of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whom he used to meet at this period, the time of the latter's new celebrity: "The fruit I gained from intercourse with him," he says, "and from his example, was to make me reflect on the imprudence of my youth. Here, I said, is a man who has taken time to think before writing; and I, in the most difficult and perilous of arts, have been in a hurry to produce almost before thinking." And conscious of possessing only a *mediocre talent* for poetry, he adds, he addresses a request to Mme. de Pompadour, his patroness, for some post which will make him independent of the labour of his pen; he had in his mind a piece of advice that Mme. de Tencin had given him: "Woe, she said to me, to the man who is entirely dependent on his pen! Nothing is more precarious. The man who makes shoes is sure of his wage; the man who makes a book or a tragedy is never sure of anything."

Marmontel became, then, in 1753, Secretary to the Administration of the Crown Buildings under M. de Marigny, Mme. de Pompadour's brother; from that time he lived at Versailles, and during five years he lived pell-mell and by turns with artists, with superintendents of the Menus-Plaisirs, working according to his humour, studying at his own times, and seeing all sorts of societies of which he gives us a faithful picture, the society of the heads of departments as well as that of the philosophers, the financier Bouret as well as d'Alembert. " Yes, I admit it, " he says," all was alike to me: pleasure, study, the table, philosophy; I loved wisdom with the wise, but I was ready to play the fool with fools. My character was still unsteady, variable and inconsistent. I adored virtue; I yielded to the example and the attraction of vice." And he compares himself with Aristippus as described by Horace: *Omnis Aristippum decuit color*. . . . But Marmontel was a rather robust and somewhat noisy, a rather awkward and zealous, a rather Limousin Aristippus, and not quite as Attic as the other. He is not satisfied with trying, with tasting the vices, the corruptions and the declamations of his time, he gulps them down, he adopts them, at least en passant, and there is (if we may presume to say so of a man of so much intelligence) a slight degree of silliness in his conduct. Having touched upon this point, we will quickly acknowledge his amiable social qualities, that facility to take to everything, that shrewdness under his simplicity and that cordiality which succeeds in finding ingenious expression. "I have always found it easier," he said, "to be self-sufficing in grief than in joy. As soon as my heart is sad, it desires to be alone. To be happy with myself I have need of friends."

Marmontel often had need of his friends, for he was habitually happy. He was happy as long as he remained with M. de Marigny. He was happy when in 1758 he obtained the privilege to print the *Mercure de France* and left Versailles and the post of Secretary to the Crown Buildings to return to Paris. Established at Mme. Geoffrin's, he was at all her artists' dinners, all her authors' dinners, and even at the little mysterious suppers, where, sitting between the fair Comtesse de Brionne, the beautiful Marquis de Duras and the pretty Comtesse d'Egmont, he read his "Moral Tales" in all the freshness of their bloom. The sixth book of his "Memoirs," which takes us in detail through the different circles of the eighteenth century and introduces to us one by one the principal personages which formed them, is historically one of the most curious to consult for the study of manners and of French society. Marmontel was happy, even in his misadventures; when he found himself in the Bastille for having offended that shallow Duc d'Aumont, he had quite a triumph: he remained there only eleven days, was treated with every kind of consideration, and came out again with a new reputation. What, I pray you, was a man of letters in those days, if he had not enjoyed the honours of the Bastille? In losing his privilege to print the *Mercure*, Marmontel felt that spur which from time to time is good and necessary for us; he regained his freedom and his time for the composition of longer works, and he made advances to the Academy. Lastly, what crowned his reputation was "Bélisaire" (1767), and that fifteenth chapter on Tolerance, in which the Theological Faculty discovered all sorts of damnable propositions. *Thirty-seven* propositions in the whole work were denounced and condemned.

"Bélisaire" is perfectly wearisome, and the famous fifteenth chapter, whose theology is so dull in itself, has lost the savour of its opportuneness, since the absolute tolerance that the author demands in the civil order is nearly won. I will touch only upon a single point that is to Marmontel's honour. When in Germinal of the year V. (April, 1797), Marmontel, after retiring to his hamlet of Abloville, was elected a member of the Council of Ancients by the Department of the Eure, he was expressly charged by his constituents to defend, in the National Assembly, the cause of the Catholic religion, then proscribed and persecuted, and to that end he composed a speech, which is still readable, on the free exercise of religious worship. Now, in this speech, it is in the name of the same principles of tolerance, professed in "Bélisaire" in favour of the dissenting religions, that Marmontel demands for the Catholic religion, proscribed in its turn, liberty of rites, of ceremonies, of solemnities even, the reawakening of the church bells in the country districts and the reappearance of the sign of the Cross. It seems to me that this noble commentary on the fifteenth chapter of "Bélisaire" is calculated to disarm controversy for ever (if it were tempted to rise up again on this occasion), and to keep irony in respect.

Voltaire, encouraging Marmontel on the occasion of this war over "Bélisaire," wrote to him: "Illustrious professor, crush the monster *quite gently*." We know what he meant by the *monster*; but Marmontel really understood thereby nothing more than intolerance, and he did indeed set about it gently. In the letters that Voltaire writes to him, the master seems to comply with these dispositions of the disciple, when, after ridiculing the different cabals, theological and other factions, he adds: "The chiefs of my faction are Horace, Virgil and Cicero." He writes to him again, as if he desired in every point to acquiesce in his inclinations: "I hear that in Paris all is faction, frivolity and wickedness. Happy the honest people who love the arts and who keep away from the tumult! . . . Literature and a noble heart are the true charm of society." That is indeed what Marmontel thought; his soul was above all sociable and literary. In criticising the men of letters and philosophers of his time, he strips them of that bitterness and that fanaticism from which they were anything but free on certain subjects; he lends them a little of his own mildness and his own bonhomie. "O my children!" he exclaims, speaking of the conversations between d'Alembert and Mairan, "what souls they were to trouble themselves about nothing more than the movements of the Ecliptic (d'Alembert), or about the manners and arts of the Chinese (Mairan)! Not a vice to degrade them, not a regret to consume them, not a passion to sadden and torment them; they are free with that freedom which is the companion of joy, and without which there never was any pure and enduring gaiety." I think that this eulogy might fit Mairan, but as to d'Alembert, I doubt it. It is enough to read his Correspondence with Voltaire to see that his soul was not free from philosophic animosities and sectarian passions.

Speaking of the dinners given by Helvétius and d'Holbach, Marmontel carries the lenity of his memories very far when he advances "that there are some revered and inviolable subjects *which were never submitted to the discussion of opinions. God*, *virtue*, *the sacred laws of natural morality*, *were never questioned*, at least in my presence." It was with sounds as with colours: Marmontel readily softened and toned down what he heard as well as what he saw.

Like the majority of the writers of his day, Marmontel formed many illusions on the goodness of the human race. He thought that all men cannot be great, but that *all may be good.* He readily believed that with "Moral Tales," with "Bélisaires," and with "Incas," one can amend the world. His observation as a moralist and his talent as an artist sinned equally through this softness and this ingenuousness that never penetrated to the bottom of hearts or of human things. It is enough for the honour of his memory that on seeing men becoming suddenly wicked and savage he arrested his bonhomie in time, and did not allow it to degenerate either into faint-heartedness or silliness. He had the courage to say *no* to evil when he saw it face to face. Nominated by the Tiers-État of the Paris Commune to be an elector in 1789, with Bailly, Target, Guillotin, etc., he was at first the object of a marked favour, and it may be said that he held in his own hands his election to the States-General; but, seeing at the price of what concessions it was to be bought, he renounced it. His popularity lasted only six days.[1] By this wise course he honoured the end of his career.

In his old age he had more vigour than in his youth. As a young man we see him as he depicts himself, very much in society, very little of a stoic, active to succeed, to push himself in the world, to obtain patronage by honest means: if he has a footing at Mme. de Pompadour's, he is not on bad terms with the little Court of the Dauphin. He does not seek favour at any price, but neither does he reject it; he receives it very kindly when it passes his way. Marmontel is neither a Republican nor a savage. The *ancien régime* had ended by completely adopting him and overwhelming him with favours: he was not ungrateful. A member of the French Academy from 1763 and Permanent Secretary from 1783, historiographer of France, historiographer of the Crown Buildings, entitled to apartments in the Louvre and at Versailles, receiving pensions from the *Mercure* and from other sources, he enjoyed, in the years that preceded the Revolution, the most complete existence of a man of letters that one could desire. His works added much to his income: his grand operas, his comic operas were successes; his "Moral Tales" had a prodigious sale; for "Les Incas," which were not so successful, the publisher paid him thirty-six thousand francs. Marmontel, the measure of whose desires was full, or nearly so, wanted to settle down to final happiness by marrying. He married a young and pretty niece of the Abbé Morellet; he was fifty-four years of age, but that did not daunt him; he was very much in love with his wife, and he yielded with bliss to this family life for which he was made.[1] His morality, he admits, was immediately influenced by his new position, by his new interests; without becoming rigid, it immediately ceased being lax.

---

[1] On May 8, 1789, there was, in the General Assembly of the Electors of the Tiers-État of Paris, a denunciation of the Decree of the Council which suppressed the *Journal des États-Généraux*, published by Mirabeau. Target who, to win popularity, made this denunciation, demanded the unrestricted freedom of the press. On his motion a vote was taken by the Assembly, and it was reported that "the Assembly of the Tiers-État of the City of Paris *unanimously* protested against the Act of the Council, etc." This *unanimously* was true with the exception of one vote. "When the vote was being taken," says Bailly in his "Memoirs," "I remarked that one member, M. Marmontel, did not rise. He was in the second row and so hidden by those who were standing. I said nothing (Bailly was the secretary), but, in spite of the apparent unanimity, somebody, no doubt from malice, called for the contrary vote, which was not always done at that time. The President was obliged to obey, and M. Marmontel had the courage to stand up *alone*. Although I was not of his opinion," adds Bailly, "I admired his firmness, which did him honour on this occasion; but dissatisfaction with the substance of his opinion made me foretell that he would not be a deputy." Had Bailly, indeed, cause to congratulate himself upon being one? and was not Marmontel, who was then alone in his opinion, the foreteller?

"Public opinion," he says, "example, the seductions of vanity, and above all the attraction of pleasure, mar in young souls the rectitude of the inner sense. The light air and tone with which old libertines jest at the scruples of virtue and ridicule the rules of a delicate honesty, make it easy for us to attach no serious importance to them. It was especially this *softness of conscience* that my new condition cured in me.

---

[1] "He believes," says Saint-Lambert, "that marriage and paternity were invented for him; he enjoys them as if he had the monopoly of them."

"Shall I say it? one must be a husband, one must be a father, to think sanely about those contagious vices which attack morality at its source, those pleasant and treacherous vices which bring trouble, shame, hatred, desolation, despair into the bosom of families."

We applaud these honourable sentiments and these right principles; we smile, however, when we think of the friend of Mlle. Clairon, of Mlle. Navarre and so many others, and those tardy and embellished confidences that he cannot help soon disclosing to his children. He takes great care, however, to add that *he has only painted himself in half-figure*. And, indeed, the volume of Marmontel's "Posthumous Works," published in 1820, shows that when describing his wild youth in prose, he greatly toned it down.

Leaving aside the posthumous poem to which I allude,[1] Marmontel showed himself to be anything but a poet. In poetic theory he was no more than a semi-innovator; he had a leaning towards *romanticism*, if we may say so, but without foreseeing whither it led him. He was severe on Virgil, favourable to Lucan; he was enamoured of Quinault and opposed to Boileau. When abusing the latter, he had no idea that in Boileau's lines there was more true poetry of style than in all those prosaic and pretended philosophic verses of the eighteenth century, with the exception of a few pieces of Voltaire. Criticism, by the way, did not spare Marmontel. He was chastised by Le Brun in verse, and even in prose (in the paper *La Renommée littéraire*, 1763) for his impertinences to Boileau. When he took upon himself to try to correct Rotrou's "Wenceslas" in compliance with a fancy of Mme. de Pompadour, Grimm remarked that to dress up Rotrou in the modern style was an undertaking which showed bad taste. "But this remark," he adds severely, "can only be made for the benefit of those who really have a good taste. They alone are able to feel that in a man of genius everything is precious, even his faults, and that it is folly to try to correct them." When Marmontel retouched Quinault (which was a less serious matter), he was charged with having turned Quinault's verse into the style of Chapelain. Whether the reproach is just or not, matters little: these are things that are not worth the trouble of being verified. I repeat, leaving aside a poem which by reason of its nature escapes investigation, and in which one would find more verve and wit than poetry even, we must go to Marmontel's prose to find the clearness, the elegance and the easy precision which distinguish him.

---

[1] "La Neuvaine de Cythère."

He wrote nothing better than his articles in the "Encyclopédie," which have been collected and published with the title "Éléments de Littérature." A diversified learning, ingenious observations of detail, well-differentiated shades of thought, a delicate synonymy in diction, make it a book which may always be perused with pleasure, and which the young, if they are not proud, may read with profit.

It would be unjust to confine the whole Marmontel (excepting his "Memoirs") to his critical articles, and not to add to them, in a quite different branch, a very small number of "Moral Tales," in which he shows inventiveness and intelligent analysis. In this delicate choice, which would demand more time than I can give to it to-day, I will only indicate the little tale entitled "Heureusement."

Marmontel, modest, occupied, appreciated, having consciously confined himself to the subordinate kinds of literature, "to kinds of authorship whose success, he said, could be easily pardoned," lived happy and was even wise enough to despise the criticisms which had at all times harassed him from a distance. From this rule of conduct he departed only once, and that late in life: it was on the occasion of the quarrel on music, the open war between Gluck and Piccini. But there his moderation suddenly failed him; he threw himself into the forefront of the fray, he broke lances with everybody for Piccini, for Italian music, with an unbounded ardour and a passion in which the love of melody is less perceptible than the need to expend a remnant of youth.

It is curious to observe in Marmontel's " Memoirs " the impression produced by the approach of the Revolution. These pleasing " Memoirs," which were like " a walk he was taking with his children," suddenly altered their character: with the twelfth book we quit biography, society portraits and conversations, and petty quarrels: we enter upon the preoccupations and the serious anxieties of history. In the following books Marmontel continues to set forth facts with lucidity and to describe political personages with intelligence and animation; but it is no longer the father speaking to his children, it is the historiographer of France fulfilling his charge and his last duties towards Louis XVI. He almost completely forgets his individuality, and only just reappears in two or three passages.

Optimistic though he was by nature, Marmontel cherished few illusions since the beginning of 1789: a memorable conversation he had with Chamfort and which he reported in full detail quickly enlightened him on the importance of the attacks and the designs of the assailants. Threatened with ruin in his turn and seeing his fortune crumbling together with the old order of things, he thought of taking shelter in some rustic retreat and continuing to look after his children's education. A few days before August 10, he quitted Paris and retired first to Saint-Germain in the neighbourhood of Évreux, then to Couvicourt, and from there to the hamlet of Abloville near Gaillon, where he had bought a peasant's house, with two or three acres of garden. There he allowed the storm to pass. I have said that at the reawakening of society, he was elected to the Council of Ancients by the Department of the Eure; the 18 Fructidor annulled his election, without striking him, however. He returned to private life, writing to the last books for his children, books on Grammar, Logic, Morality, which testify to the lucidity of his mind as well as to the serenity and benignity of his soul. He lived long enough to see the 18 Brumaire, but not long enough to enter upon the new century; he expired with the dying century, of which he represented so well the average, distinguished, pleasing qualities, a little too mixed no doubt, but chastened in him during this honourable decline.

MEMOIRS OF MARMONTEL

FIRST BOOK

I WRITE the story of my life for my children; their mother wished me to do so. Should anyone else glance at it, let him pardon the details which I considered interesting to them, but which will be too minute for any other. My children need to reap the lessons that time and opportunity, example, and the multitude of my experiences have taught me. I want them to learn from me never to despair of themselves but to guard against that always; to fear the dangers of good fortune, and to pass courageously through the straits of adversity.

I had one advantage over them in being born in a place where inequality of wealth and position was felt hardly at all. A little property, or trade, or a small business was the condition of nearly every inhabitant of Bort, the little Limousin town where I was born. Moderate circumstances took the place of wealth; everybody was free and occupied usefully. Therefore pride, frankness and natural nobility were not debased by any kind of humiliation, and nowhere else was foolish arrogance worse received or more quickly punished. So I may say that in my childhood, although born in obscurity, I knew only my peers: perhaps the slight stubbornness in my character comes from that, and neither age nor judgment have softened it enough.

Bort on the Dordogne between the Auvergne and the Limousin is terrifying at first sight to the traveller, who from far off, right high up on the mountain, sees it at the foot of a precipice—the torrents formed by storms threatening to submerge it, or on the point of being crushed by a chain of volcanic rocks, some placed like towers on the height that dominates the town, some already hanging over and half uprooted; but Bort becomes a smiling abode when the reassured eye turns to the valley. Above the town, a green island encircled by the river that propels the moving noisy mill, is a grove inhabited by birds. On both banks of the river, orchards, meadows and fields cultivated by industrious people, make a variegated picture. Below the town the vale spreads itself out on one side in a vast meadow watered by fresh-water springs, on the other in fields crowned with a circle of hills, whose gentle slope forms a sharp contrast with the rocks opposite. Further on, this circle is broken by a torrent from the mountains, which rolls and leaps through forests, rocks and precipices, and tumbles into the Dordogne in one of the loveliest cataracts of the continent—whether because of the volume of water or the height of its fall; a phenomenon which only needs more frequent observers to be famous.

Near there was the small farm where I used to read Virgil, in the shade of the flowering trees that surrounded our bee-hives, and where I had such delicious meals of their honey. On the other side of the town above the mill and on the slope of the hill, is the enclosure where my father took me on holidays to gather grapes from the vine he himself had planted, or cherries and plums and apples from trees he had grafted.

But what, in my memory, makes the charm of my home, is the impression that remains of the early sense, filling and penetrating my soul, of the inexpressible tenderness my family had for me. If there is any goodness in my character, I think I owe it to these gentle feelings, to the constant happiness of loving and being loved. Heaven is indeed kind when it gives us good parents.

I owe much also to a certain urbanity of manners which existed then in my town; and there must have been an attraction in the simple sweet life we led there, for the children of Bort very seldom went away from it. Their youth was a cultivated one, and they distinguished themselves in the neighbouring colleges, but they came back to their town like a swarm of bees to the hive after the plundering.

I learned to read in a little convent of nuns who were good friends of my mother's. They educated girls only, but made an exception to this rule for my sake. A well-born lady, who had lived for a long time in retreat in this asylum, was kind enough to take care of me. I ought to cherish her memory and that of the nuns dearly, for they loved me as their own child.

From there I went to the school kept by a priest in the town, who gratuitously, because he liked it, devoted himself to the teaching of children. The only son of a shoemaker, the most honest man in the world, this clergyman was a perfect model of filial piety. I can still remember the seemly relationship between them, their mutual regard; the older man never forgetting the priestly dignity of the son, and the latter always remembering the sanctity of fatherhood. The Abbé Voissière (for that was his name), after having fulfilled his duties at church, divided his time between reading and giving us lessons. In fine weather a short walk, and for exercise, sometimes a game of mall in the meadow, were his only amusements. He was serious, severe, and of an imposing appearance. For all companionship he had two friends, people who were much respected in our town. They lived together in the most peaceful intimacy, meeting every day, and every day finding each other the same—without change or coldness in their pleasure at seeing each other; and to complete their joy, they died within a short time of one another. I have not seen many examples of so constant and sweet an agreement in the course of human life.

At this school I had a friend whom from my infancy I had striven to equal. His wise serene art, his studiousness, and the care he took of his books—never a stain to be seen—his fair hair, always well-combed, and his simple well-kept clothes, and perennially white linen were an obvious example to me; rarely does one child inspire another with such respect. His name was Durant. His father was a labourer in a neighbouring village and knew mine; I used to walk with his son to this village to visit him. And how that white-haired old man would welcome us! wonderful cream and milk and new bread; and he was full of prophecies for a happy future for me because I showed so much respect for his age. I would like to strew flowers on his grave . . . he must lie very peacefully, for in his life he did nothing that was not right and good. Twenty years afterwards his son and I met in Paris when following very different paths; but I recognised his unalterable wisdom and seemly behaviour; and it was no light satisfaction to me to name one of his children at the font. But let us return to my early years.

My Latin lessons were interrupted by a strange incident. I had a great desire to learn, but had no memory—I had just enough to retain the sense of what I read—but the words left absolutely no trace in my head, and it was like trying to write in moving sand, to fix them there. I tried perseveringly to overcome this weakness by study, and this labour was too much for my strength at that age; my nerves were affected. I became somnambulistic: at night when sound asleep, I got up from my bed, and with half-open eyes, recited aloud the lessons I had learned. "He will go mad," said my father to my mother, "if you don't stop him doing that wretched Latin." And my studies were suspended. But I took them up again after about eight or ten months; and at the end of my eleventh year, my master judging that I would be received into the fourth class, my father agreed, although reluctantly, to take me himself to the college of Mauriac, which was the nearest to Bort.

This reluctance of my father's was wise, and I must justify it. I was the eldest of a large family; my father, rather strict, but pre-eminently kind under his harsh, severe manner, loved my mother to idolatry; and he was so right; my tender mother was the worthiest, most interesting and lovable woman of her kind. I have never known how she could have acquired such charm of mind and elevation of soul in the simple schooling of our little convent at Bort: she had, particularly in speech and manner, so right and delicate and fine a sense that her taste must have been purely instinctive. My kind Bishop of Limoges, the virtuous Coëtlosquet, often spoke of her to me, in Paris, with the tenderest interest, and of the letters she wrote to him when putting me in his charge.

My father had as much reverence as love for her. He did not reproach her for her weakness for me—and this weakness had some excuse: I was the only child she had nursed herself: her too frail health had not allowed her to perform this sweet service again. Her mother loved me no less. I seem to see her yet, the dear little old lady—her charming disposition and her sweet and laughing gaiety. Thriftily she presided over the household, and gave us an example of filial gentleness—for she also had her mother, and the mother of her husband, of whom she took the greatest care. I am going rather far back in speaking of my great-grandparents; but I remember well that they were still alive at the age of eighty, drinking a little cup of wine in the chimney-corner and recalling the olden times, about which they told us marvellous tales.

Add to this household three sisters of my grandmother and my mother's sister, the aunt who is still left to me; amidst these women and a swarm of children my father stood alone: all of us lived on very little. Order, economy, work, a little business, and above all frugality, kept us in comfort. The little garden produced almost enough vegetables for household needs; the enclosure gave us fruit; and our quinces, apples and pears, and the honey from our bees were the most delicious breakfasts during the winter for the children and the dear old ladies. The Saint Thomas flock of sheep clothed the women and children in wool: my aunts wove it: they wove also the field hemp for our linen; and in the evenings, by the light of a lamp filled with oil from our walnuts, the young neighbours came to strip the hemp with us, and made a bewitching picture. The harvest of grain from the little farm assured us our sustenance; the wax and honey from the bees, which one of my aunts cultivated so carefully, was a profit at very little cost; the oil crushed from fresh nuts had a savour and perfume that we preferred to the taste and perfume of olive-oil. Our buckwheat cakes, moistened, all hot, with good Mont-Dor butter, were a most appetising feast for us. I don't know what dish could have seemed better to us than our turnips and chestnuts; and in winter when these beautiful turnips were grilling round the hearth, and when we heard the water bubbling in the pot where the savoury, sweet chestnuts were cooking, our hearts beat with joy. I remember too the perfume of a fine quince roasting in the cinders and the pleasure our grandmother had in dividing it between us. The most temperate of women made us all greedy. Thus, in a household where nothing was wasted, all these little things together kept us in a sort of comfort, and left little to be spent on our needs. Dead wood from the forests near was abundant and of little value—my father was allowed to take what he wanted. Excellent mountain butter and the most delicate cheeses were common and cost little: wine was not dear, and my father was sparing in his use of it.

But, in short, although very moderate, the expenses of the house were nearly always the same as our means; and my father's foresight exaggerated the cost of my living at college. Besides, he thought time employed in study was badly used. Latin, so he said, made people lazy. Perhaps too he had a premonition of the misfortune that was to snatch him away from us in premature death; and by making me take up a more useful position early and one less slow and uncertain, he thought of leaving me as a second father to his children. However, urged by my mother, who passionately desired that her eldest son at least should finish his studies, he agreed to take me to the college of Mauriac.

Overwhelmed with caresses, bathed in gentle tears and charged with blessings, I left with my father. He carried me behind him on the saddle, and my heart beat with joy—but it beat with fear when my father said these words: "They have promised me, my son, that you will be taken in the fourth class; if you are not, you come back with me, and that will be all." Imagine how tremblingly I appeared before the regent who was going to decide my fate. Fortunately it was kind Father Malosse, for whom I have so much praise: he had in his glance, in the tone of his voice, and in his face, so natural and sensitive a kindness, that his first greeting showed him to be the friend of the stranger to whom he was speaking. He welcomed us with touching grace, and asked my father to come back and find out the result of the examination. Seeing that I was still very timid, he began by reassuring me; then as a test, he gave me a theme: this theme was full of almost insolvable difficulties for me. I did it badly, and after reading it, he said: "My child, you are very far from being ready to enter this class; you would hardly be fit for the fifth even." I began to cry. "I am lost," I told him, "my father doesn't want me to continue my studies at all; he only brought me here to please my mother, and on the way he declared that if I were not taken into the fourth class, he would take me back home: that will hurt me so much and make my mother so sorrowful. For pity's sake, take me. I promise you, father, to study so hard that in a little while you will be satisfied with me." The regent, touched by my tears and willingness, let me enter, and told my father not to be uneasy about me—that he was certain I would do well.

I was lodged, according to the custom of the college, with five other pupils, at a respectable artisan's in the town; and my father, sad enough at going without me, left me there, with my bundle and victuals for the week. These victuals consisted of a large rye loaf, a little cheese, a piece of bacon and two or three pounds of beef; my mother had added a dozen apples. And those, in a word, were the weekly provisions of the best-fed of the college students. Our townswoman cooked for us; and for her trouble, her fire and lamp, beds and lodging, and even the vegetables from her little garden, which she put in the pot, we each gave her twenty-five sous a month; so that, counting all in except my clothes, I might cost my father four to five louis a year. It was a lot for him, and I longed to save him the expense. The day following my arrival, when I went to my class in the morning, I saw my regent at his window, and he made a sign with his finger to go up and see him. "My child," he said, "you need special instruction and much study to be on a level with your fellow-pupils. We will begin with the rudiments; come here half an hour before the class every morning, and repeat the rules you have learnt: whilst explaining them I will point out their use." I cried too at that, but with gratitude. When thanking him for his kindness, I begged him to add to it by not reading my exercises aloud in class. He promised me and I went along to study.

I cannot speak enough of the tender zeal he had in teaching me, and how attractive he knew how to make the lessons. At the simple mention of my mother's name, for I spoke of her sometimes, he seemed to feel her mind; and when I showed him her letters where her motherly love spoke of him with gratitude, tears flowed from his eyes.

From the month of October, where we were, until Easter, there was no amusement nor diversion for me; but after that half-year, familiarised with all my rules, sound in their application and disentangled from the thorns of syntax, I went on more freely. Thenceforward I was one of the best scholars of the class and perhaps the happiest; for I loved my work, and being almost certain of doing it fairly well, it was simply a pleasure. The choice of words and their use, translating them from one language to another, and even finding some elegance in the construction of phrases, began to absorb me; and this labour, which cannot be done without analysing ideas, strengthened my memory. I perceived that it was the idea attached to the word that made it take root; and this reflection soon made me feel that the study of languages was also the study of the art of unravelling the shades of difference in thought; to analyse it, to mould the texture and seize the character and elements with precision; that words, as much as new ideas, enter and develop in young people's heads, and that the lower classes are an elementary course of philosophy very much richer, more extensive and of more real use than was supposed by people who argue that only Latin is learnt in colleges.

It was thinking all this that made me notice, in the study of languages, an old man to whom the regent had recommended me. This old Jesuit, Father Bourges, was one of the men most versed in Latinity. Deputed to follow and complete the labour of Father Vanière in his dictionary of poetic Latin, he had humbly asked if he might take the fifth class in this little college of the Auvergne mountains at the same time. He took an interest in me and asked me to go and see him on the mornings of holidays. You may be sure I did not fail; and he was good enough to give me sometimes whole hours of instruction. Alas! the only service I could render him was to serve mass to him; but it was of value in his eyes and this is why.

This good old man was tormented with apprehensiveness in his prayers because of the wandering of his mind, which he could only ward off with most painful concentration: especially in saying mass he had to redouble his efforts to fix his mind on each word he pronounced; and when it came to the words of the sacrifice, drops of sweat fell from his bald prostrate forehead. I used to see all his body tremble with fear and respect, as if he had seen the vault of heaven open above the altar, and the living God descend. There never was so deep and living a faith: and after fulfilling this holy duty he was spent.

He refreshed himself in the pleasure he had in teaching me, and because of my delight in receiving his lessons. It was he who taught me that ancient literature was an inexhaustible source of wealth and beauty, and who gave me the thirst for it that sixty years of study have not been able to slake. So in our obscure college, I found as master one of the most lettered men, perhaps, in the world; but not long could I enjoy this advantage: Father Bourges was transferred, and six years later, I found him again in the maison "professe" of Toulouse, infirm and almost forsaken. This abandonment of old men is a very hateful vice in the order and customs of the Jesuits. The most laborious man, useful for a very long period, as soon as he ceases to be so, is cast aside; a harshness as senseless as it is inhuman—amongst creatures who all grow old and who, each one in his turn, will be thrown aside.

With regard to our college, its distinctive characteristic was a government exercised by the students over themselves. The houses united scholars of different classes, and amongst them, an authority of age or talent was naturally established, and brought order and method into studies and customs. Thus a child who, far from his family, seemed to be left to himself outside his class, had people to watch over him and control his comrades. All worked together and at the same table; it was a circle of witnesses who under each other's eyes imposed mutual silence and attention. The lazy scholar grew weary of a mute immobility, and soon threw off his laziness; the scholar who was not clever but hard-working could make his plaint, and he would be helped and encouraged—it was not talent but will that was respected. But there was no indulgence or pity for the incurably lazy; and when a whole house was tainted with this vice, it was disgraced: the entire college despised it, and parents were warned not to put their children there. So our citizens took a great interest in boarding only studious scholars. I have seen some sent away solely for laziness and want of discipline. Therefore idleness was not tolerated in any of these groups of children; amusement and recreation never came until after work.

A custom which I have only seen in this college gave renewed fervour to the studies towards the end of the year. In order to go up from one class to another there was a severe examination to undergo, and one of the tasks for this examination was a memory test. According to the class, it was, for poetry, from Phædrus, or Ovid, or Virgil, or Horace; and for prose, Cicero, or Livy, or Quintus-Curtius, or Sallust; to remember the whole of it by heart took a considerable amount of study. It was begun early, and so as not to encroach upon usual work, we did it from the break of day until the first morning class; we did it in the fields, where, divided into bands, each with a book in his hand, we went murmuring like a veritable swarm of bees. In youth it is painful to tear oneself from morning sleep, but the diligent ones used force on the sluggards; often I felt myself dragged from my bed still asleep; and if since then I have a little more elasticity and aptness in my memory, I owe it to this exercise.

The spirit of order and economy distinguished our government no less than the taste for work. Newcomers, the youngest, learnt from the old ones to take care of their clothes and linen; to preserve their books and husband their provisions. All the morsels of bacon and beef and mutton that were put in the pot were cleanly strung like a chaplet of beads, and if any discussion arose over the medley the citizeness was the arbitrator. As to the dainty things our families sent us on certain holidays, there were communal feasts, and those who received nothing from home were equally invited. I remember with pleasure the delicate care the more fortunate of the band took to keep the others from feeling any distressing inequality. When one of these presents arrived the citizeness announced it, but she was forbidden to say which of us it was for, and he himself would have blushed to have boasted of it. This discretion was much approved by my mother when I told her about it. Our recreations were exercises in antique sports, in winter on the ice in the midst of snow; in summer weather, far away in the country in the heat of the sun; and neither running, nor wrestling, nor boxing, nor throwing the disc, and using the sling, nor swimming, were strange to us. In the heat we used to go and bathe many a league from the town; the little ones would fish for cray-fish in the streams, and the larger for eels and trout in the rivers; hunting quails with nets after the harvest was our keenest pleasure; and, returning from a long course woe to the fields where the green-peas had not already been picked! Not one of us would have stolen a pin, but, in our ethics, there was a maxim that what could be eaten was no theft. I refrained as much as possible from this sort of pillaging, but, without having co-operated, it is true, however, that I participated in it, first by supplying my portion of bacon for seasoning the peas and then by eating them with the other accomplices. To do as the others did seemed to me a duty of my rank I dared not dispense with, save to come to terms afterwards with my confessor by restoring my share in the theft in alms.

However, in the class above mine, I noticed a scholar who kept his wisdom and virtue unchangingly, and I said to myself that his was the only good example to follow; but, whilst looking at him with envious eyes, I did not dare believe I had the right to distinguish myself as he did. Amalvy was esteemed in college for so many reasons, and was so fearless amongst us, that the distance he kept from us seemed natural and right. In this rare young man all qualities of mind and spirit seemed to harmonise and make him perfect. Nature had endowed him with an appearance that one felt must be reserved for worth. His face was noble and gentle, he was very tall, and bore himself thoughtfully and his manner was grave but serene. I would see him arrive at college, always some of his fellow-pupils at his side, and they proud to accompany him. Sociable with them without being familiar, he never laid aside the dignity that gave him the leadership of his fellows. The cross, which was the mark of this headship, never left his buttonhole; not one dared try and take it from him. I admired him, I liked to watch him, and every time I saw him I was dissatisfied with myself. It was not that I had not quite distinguished myself after leaving the third by dint of hard work, but I had two or three rivals. Amalvy had not one. I had not acquired that permanent success in my compositions that astonished us in his, still less had I the easy and certain memory that Amalvy was gifted with. He was older than I: that was my only consolation; and my ambition was to equal him when I reached his age. In unravelling, as far as possible, what was in my heart, I can truthfully say that there was never any evil inclination to envy in this feeling of emulation: I did not distress myself that there was an Amalvy in the world, but I would have asked heaven that there might be two and that I was the second.

A still more precious advantage than competition, in this college, was the spirit of religion they cherished so carefully. It was a healthy preservation of adolescent morals, this habit and necessity of going every month to confession. The shame of a humble avowal of secret faults saved us more perhaps from a greater number of sins than the most saintly motives.

So, then, it was at Mauriac, from eleven until fifteen, that I learnt my humanities; in rhetoric I was nearly always at the top of the class. My dear mother was enchanted. When my dimity vests were sent back to her, she looked quickly to see if the silver chain which held the cross had blackened my buttonhole; and when she saw this sign of triumph all the mothers in the neighbourhood were told of her joy; our good nuns thanked heaven for it; and dear Abbé Voissière was radiant with glory. The sweetest memory I still have is the happiness I gave my mother; but I took as much care to hide my griefs from her, as I took pleasure in telling her of my successes. Sometimes I had troubles enough to have distressed her, had the slightest complaint escaped me. Such as the quarrel I had with Father Bis, the inspector of the college, when I was in the third class, over the Auvergne dance; and the danger I ran of being whipped, when in the second class for rhetoric, for dictating an amusing amplification; another time for having gone to see the mechanism of a clock. Fortunately I extricated myself from all these dangers without an accident, and with indeed a little glory.

Everyone knows the envious malice that the favourites attract at the courts of kings; it is the same at college. The especial care that my master in the fourth form took of me, and the assiduity with which I visited him every morning, having at first made people look on me jealously and mistrustfully, I piqued myself on showing that I could be a better and more loyal comrade than those who accused me of not being so, and who were on their guard against me.

My master in the second class was no longer Father Malosse, who had so loved me; it was Father Cibier, as dry and sour as the other was mild and gentle. Without much wit nor, I think, much knowledge, Cibier managed his class very well. His particular cleverness was to excite emulation in us by pricking us with jealousy. If an inferior scholar did ever so little better than usual, he praised him in a way that put the fear of a fresh rival into the better ones. It was in this spirit that one day, recalling a certain development of a subject that was supposed to have been written by a mediocre student, he defied us all ever to do as well. Now, it was known who had written this excessively lauded composition. The secret had been kept, because it was strictly forbidden to do work for others. But impatience at hearing borrowed work praised to excess could not be contained. "He didn't do it, mon père," cried someone. "Then who did?" he asked angrily. There was silence. "Then you must tell me," he said to the student himself, who was there; and the latter, weeping, said it was I. I had to confess my fault, but I begged my master to hear me and he did. "It was his birthday, the day of St. Pierre," I said, "and Durif was giving us a dinner: he was so busy feasting his friends that he could not finish his form work, and it was the composition that worried him most. I thought it permissible and right to shield him from trouble, so I offered to work for him, whilst he worked for us."

There were at least two guilty people; the master would only see one, and his spite fell on me. Confused and giddy with rage, he said he would call the *correcteur*, to punish me as I deserved. At the word *correcteur*, I made up my bundle of books and was going to leave the college: thenceforward no more studying for me and my fate would have been different; but the feeling of simple justice, so quick and keen in early youth, would not let my fellow-pupils see me abandoned. "No," cried the whole class, "it's an unjust punishment, and if he is obliged to go, we will all go." The master calmed down, and forgave me, but in the name of the class, quoting the dictator Papirius as his example. The whole college agreed with his clemency, with the exception of the prefect, who maintained that it was an act of weakness, and that one must never give in to rebellion.

Did one take the commonly formed idea of the policy of the society—so easily condemned and hastily abolished—then no Jesuit was less so at heart than Father Balme. His character was strong and frank; his impartiality and uprightness, the inflexible justice he maintained in his class, and the noble and tender respect he showed his scholars, had won our esteem and love.

Across the austere propriety of his position his natural sincerity showed signs of a forceful ardour that would have suited a soldier's courage better than the mind of a monk. I remember one day a fellow-pupil, a blockish and unpolished creature, having answered him rudely, he bolted suddenly from his desk, and tearing up with a loud noise an oak-plank from the floor, he said, holding it up over him: "Wretch, I will not have any rhetorician flogged, but I will knock down anyone impudent enough to be wanting in respect." This sort of correction pleased us infinitely; we were grateful to him for the fright the noise of the breaking plank gave us, and we watched delightedly while the insolent boy humbly begged for pardon, on his knees before the strange sort of club.

That year I had rather a long vacation; but happily in our town I found a former country curate, a relative, although a somewhat distant one—a learned man, who taught me the logic of Port Royal, and who moreover gave himself the trouble to exercise my Latin; on our walks he would only use that language, which he spoke easily. This was of inestimable value to me, for when studying philosophy, of which Latin is the tongue, I found myself, as it were, in a country in which I had been naturalised. But before passing on to that, I want to cast a few glances on the years that had just gone; I want to speak of the yearly vacations which drew me home, and repaid my work and troubles by such sweet repose.

The short Christmas holidays were spent in enjoying our mutual tenderness—my relations and I—and without other diversion than the duties of goodwill and friendship. As it was hard weather, my keenest delight was to be cosily near a good fire, for at Mauriac, even in the sharpest cold, when we were beset with ice, and had to make a road for ourselves in the snow in the morning, at our lodging we found only a fire of a few sticks under the pot, at which we could scarcely unfreeze our fingers turn and turn about. As often as not our hosts were round the fireplace and it was a favour to let us get near it; and during our work in the evening, when our benumbed fingers could no longer hold the pen, the flame of the lamp was the sole hearth where we could unstiffen them. Some of my comrades, born in the mountains and hardened to cold, endured it better than I, and accused me of being delicate; and in a room where the wind whistled through chinks in the panes, they thought it ridiculous that I should be paralysed, and mocked at my shivers. I was ashamed of being so weak and chilly, and went with them to the ice, amidst the snows, to get accustomed if possible to the rigours of winter; I tamed nature, I did not conquer her, I did not alter, but only learned to suffer. So when I got into a nice bed at home or in the corner by the fire, I felt all quickened; it was one of the most delicious moments in my life; a delight that soft indulgence would never have taught me.

During these Christmas holidays, my kind grandmother, with great mysteriousness, confided her household secrets to me. She let me see, as if they were so many treasures, the winter's provisions. Her bacon, and hams, and sausages, her pots of honey, and stores of buckwheat and rye, of peas and beans, her heaps of turnips and chestnuts, her beds of straw covered with fruit. "Look, my child," she would say, "these are the gifts of Providence: how many good people have not as much as we! and what thanks we ought to give for such favours!" For herself, no one could have been more temperate than this wise house-mistress; but it was her happiness to have abundance in the house. A feast she prepared for us with the greatest joy was supper on Christmas night. As every year it was the same, we expected it, but took great care not to seem to expect it, for each year she flattered herself that it was a fresh surprise and we took care to let her have this pleasure. Whilst we were at mass, the cabbage soup, the pudding and sausage and eel, the piece of salt-meadow mutton, the cakes, the apple fritters in fat, all were prepared secretly by her and one of her sisters; and I, the sole confidant of all this preparation, said never a word to anyone. After mass they came back, they found this wonderful breaking of their fast on the table and cried out at the dear good grandmother's magnificence, and these exclamations of surprise and joy were her complete success. On Twelfth Day the bean cake was another object of merry-making with us; when the New Year came there was such a succession of embraces and chorus of tender wishes in the entire family that I think it would have been impossible to watch it without being moved.

At Easter the holidays were a little longer, and when the weather was fine it allowed me certain pastimes. I have already said that the young people of our town were carefully educated; and the girls strove in emulation also; the learning of one influenced the minds of the others and gave their manner, speech and bearing, a tinge of charm and courtesy and decorum which nothing could make them forget. An innocent liberty reigned amongst them: the girls and boys walked together in the evenings, even by moonlight. Their usual amusement was singing, and the young voices joining together made sweet harmonies. I was soon admitted to their company, but until I was fifteen years of age, they could not wean me from my taste for solitude and study. I was never more content than, when in the bee-garden of Saint Thomas, spending a wonderful day reading Virgil's poems on the skill and organisation of these laborious republics which throve under the care of one of my mother's aunts. Still better than Virgil had she observed their labours and customs: also better than he did she teach me, by making me see with my own eyes, in the wonders of their instinct, signs of intelligence and wisdom which enchanted me—that had escaped the divine poet. Perhaps in my aunt's love for her bees there was some glamour—as there is in all love—and the interest she took in the young swarms was very like that of a mother for her children; but I must also say that she seemed to be as much loved by them as they were by her. I thought, myself, that they liked to fly round her, to know and understand and obey her voice: they had no sting at all for their kind mistress; and when, in a storm, she gathered them in, dried them, and warmed them with her breath and hands, you could think that their soft humming was a song of gratitude. There was no terror in the hive when their friend visited them; and if, seeing that they were less diligent than usual, either ill or languid with fatigue or old age, she poured a little wine on the floor of the hive, the same sweet murmur thanked her. She had surrounded their territory with fruit-trees and those that blossomed in the early spring; she had brought in a little stream of limpid water and made it a bed of stones to flow over, and on its banks planted thyme, lavender, margolain, serpyllum—in a word, the plants bore flowers they loved best, and which gave them the first-fruits of summer. But when the mountain began to flower and the aromatic trees shed their perfumes, our bees, disdaining the booty from their little orchard, went afar to seek ampler riches—and when they came back heavy with pollen of diverse colours, purple, blue and gold, my aunt told me the names of the plants that had been plundered.

What I saw, and was told by my aunt, and what I read in Virgil, inspired me with such a keen interest in these small people, that I forgot myself when near them, and always went away with lively regret. Ever since, and still now, I have such a love for bees, that I cannot think without pain of the custom, in certain countries, of letting them die by taking all their honey. With us, when the hive was full, we took away the excess to ease them, and left more than enough to nourish them until the next blooming; and we knew how to take the superfluous honeycombs without hurting a single one.

During the long vacation at the end of the year, all my work done, my desires satisfied, I still had time to give to society, and I admit that, every year, the youthful companionship appealed to me more and more. But, as I said, it was not until I was fifteen that the attraction was complete. The attachments made then did not alarm our families: there was so little inequality of rank or fortune, that the fathers and mothers were nearly always as suited to each other as the children, and rarely did marriage cool love: but what had no danger for my comrades extinguished my striving and brought all my study to nought. I saw hearts choose each other and form attachments, and their example made me wish to do the same. One of our young companions, the prettiest to my mind, seemed to me to be yet free, and to have—even as I—just a vague desire to please. In her freshness, she had not the tender, mild radiance of a beauty one compares to a rose; but the rosiness, the bloom and roundness of a peach is a good enough symbol of her charm. As for wit, with so beautiful a mouth, could she not do without it? Her eyes and her smile alone would have given it to her simplest speech, and on her lips good-day and good-night seemed delicate and fine to me. She must have been one or two years older than I, and this inequality, which an air of wisdom and sense made still more imposing, intimidated my growing love; but, little by little, by trying to make my attentions agreeable to her, I perceived that she was touched by them; and as soon as I could believe myself loved, I was seriously in love. I confessed it to her without evasion, and as freely she answered that her feeling was the same as mine. "But you know," she said, "that to be lovers, we must at least be able to hope to be married; and how can we expect that at our age? You are scarcely fifteen; you are going to continue your studies?" "Yes," I said, "I intend to, and my mother wishes it." "Well, there will be five years' absence before you can take a position, and I will be over twenty, and even then we shall not know what you are going to do." "Alas—it is too true," I said, "that I cannot say what I am going to be; but swear to me at least that you will never marry without taking my mother's advice, and without asking her if I have not some hope to offer." She promised me that with a charming smile, and for the rest of the holidays we gave ourselves up to loving each other with all the innocence and candour of our years. Our lonely walks and talks were spent in imagining a future for me with possibilities of success and fortune that would favour our desires; but these gentle fancies succeeded each other like dreams—one destroying the other—and after laughing over them one moment we cried the next—as children do when a wind upsets the castle they've built.

During one of our talks, as we were sitting on the slope of the meadow beside the river, an incident happened that almost cost me my life. My mother had been told of my attentions to Mademoiselle B——. She was disturbed and feared that love would diminish my liking for study and my fervour. Her aunts noticed that she was worried, and bothered her so that she could not conceal the reason. From that moment, these good women, predicting misfortune for me, vied with each other in exasperating themselves against this young girl, accusing her of coquetry, and making it a crime for her to have pleased me. So one day when my mother asked for me, one of them slipped away and came to look for me in the field, and finding me alone with the object of their rage, she overwhelmed this dear girl with most unjust reproaches without even sparing her the words—seduction and indecency. After this imprudent burst of rage she departed and left us. I was furious and my sweetheart distracted, choking with sobs and her eyes full of tears. Imagine how her sorrow worked on my mind. In vain I asked for pardon, cried at her knees, implored her to despise me, to forget this injury. "Wretch," she cried, "they accuse me of having seduced you and of wishing to unsettle you! Go from me, never see me again: no, I never want to see you any more." With these words she left, and forbade me to follow her.

I returned home, my manner wild, my eyes on fire, my head in a maze. Fortunately my father was away, and my mother was the only witness of my delirium. Seeing me pass and go up to my room she was frightened at my agitation; she followed me; I had shut myself in and she ordered me to open the door. "Oh, mother, in what state do you see me! Forgive me, I am in despair, I no longer know what I am doing and can hardly control myself. Spare me the shame of being seen like this by you." My head was wounded with the blows I had given it against the wall.

For the first time I learnt the violence and rage of anger. My mother, herself distracted, pressing me in her arms and bathing me with tears, cried aloud so sorrowfully, that all the women in the house, with one exception, ran to us, and she who dared not appear, had just confessed her guilt, and was tearing her hair over the evil she had done.

Their despair, the floods of tears and timid tender moans all around me, softened my heart and made my anger die; but I was choking, blood was swelling all my veins; they had to bleed me, my mother trembled for my life: her mother, during the bleeding, told her in a low voice all that had happened, for in vain had she asked me. "How horrible! How barbarous!" were the only words I could make her understand; to have told her more would have been too awful for me at the moment. But when the cupping had given me some relief and a little calm had changed my anger into pain, I gave my mother a simple and true account of my love, and how honestly and wisely Mademoiselle B—— had answered it; finally of the promise she had willingly given me never to marry without consulting my mother. After that, I told her how wounding to her heart and how it rent my own, to endure so unjust and deadly an insult. "Oh, mother, it is an injury nothing can wipe out!" "Alas!" she said, weeping, "I am the cause of it; it was my uneasiness over this attachment that has worried my aunts: if you cannot pardon them, you must not pardon me." At these words my arms went round her and pressed her to my heart.

To obey her I went to bed. The ferment in my blood, although much weakened, had not died down; all my nerves were shaken, and the image of this interesting and unhappy girl, whom I believed to be inconsolable, was always in my mind, with marks of the keenest and most poignant pain. My mother saw that I was chilled at this thought; and my heart, still more moved than my brain, kept my blood and senses in a disordered movement that seemed like a burning fever. The doctor, who didn't know the reason, predicted an illness, and spoke of forestalling it by a second blood-letting. "Do you think," asked my mother, "this evening will be time enough?" He answered that it would. "Then come back this evening, Monsieur; until then I will take care of him."

My mother, telling me to try and get some rest, left me alone; and, a quarter of an hour afterwards, returned accompanied . . . by whom? You can guess it, for you know her nature. "Save my son, give him back to me," she said to my young mistress, leading her up to my bed. "This child thinks you are offended; tell him you are not any longer, that we have asked for forgiveness and that you have pardoned us." "Yes, Monsieur, I have only thanks to give your excellent mother," this charming girl said to me. "There is no trouble which could not be forgotten when she overwhelms me with kindness." "Ah, it is for me, Mademoiselle, to be grateful for her love and care; she gives me life again." My mother made her sit down by my pillow—she, the sight of whom and whose voice shed such pure and mild composure in my soul. She, too, seemed to join in our dreams, and advising us to be wise and devoted: "Who knows the will of Heaven?" she said. "It is just; you are both well-born, and love will only make you worthier of happiness." "Those are very comforting words," said Mademoiselle B——, "and just what ought to calm you! As for me, you see I have no trace of anger, no resentment in my soul. Your aunt, whose hastiness wounded me, has shown her sorrow; I have just kissed her; but she is crying still—you, who are so kind, won't you kiss her?" "Yes, with all my heart," I answered. And at that moment the good aunt came to bathe my bed with tears. In the evening, the doctor found my pulse still a little shaken, but perfectly regular.

My father, on his return from the little journey he had made to Clermont, announced that he was going to take me there; not as my mother wished, to continue my studies, and follow a course of philosophy, but to learn business. "He's had enough of study and Latin," he said to her; "it is time I thought of giving him a solid position. I have a place for him in a rich merchant's; the counter will be his school." My mother fought this decision with all the force of her love, her sorrow and tears; but I, seeing that she distressed my father without dissuading him, got her to yield. "Just let me go to Clermont; I will find some way to please you there."

If I had only followed my new desire, I would have been of my father's opinion, for in a few years, business would have given me a happy enough fate; but neither my passion for study, nor my mother's will, which, as long as she lived, was my supreme law, allowed me to take the side of my love. So I left with the resolve to keep, morning and evening, an hour and a half of my time to go to classes; and assuring my master that the rest of my time would be his, I hoped he would be satisfied; but he wouldn't hear of such a proposition at all, and I had to choose between study and business. "What, Monsieur," I said to him, "eight hours a day of unremitting work in your counting-house is not enough for you! What would you want a slave to do?" He answered that it rested with me to go and be freer elsewhere. I did not have to be told twice, and that very moment I took leave of him.

All my wealth was two little crowns that my father had given me for pocket-money, and several pieces of twelve sous that my grandmother, in saying good-bye, had slipped into my hand; but the distress I was falling into was the least of my troubles. In leaving the position my father had intended for me, I was going against his will, to which I seemed to submit: would he forgive me? Wouldn't he come back to subdue me and send me back to my duty? And even if he cast me off in his anger, how bitterly he would accuse my mother of having added to my wildness? Simply thinking of the grief I would cause my mother was an agony to me. My mind agitated and my soul cast down, I entered into a church—the last refuge of the unhappy. There, as if by inspiration, an idea came to me suddenly, which changed my view of life and future dreams.

Reconciled with myself, and hoping to be so with my father because of the purity of my motive, I began by finding myself a resting-place, by hiring, near the college, an airy attic, where for furniture I had a bed, a table, a chair, all for ten sous a week—not being in a position to take a longer lease. I added to these a hermit's bowl, and provided myself with bread, fresh water and dried plums.

After settling myself, and having a frugal meal at night in my lodgings, I went to bed. I slept little; and the next day, I wrote two letters, one to my mother, in which I told her of the inflexible merchant's inhuman refusal; the other to my father, in which, letting religion and nature speak for me, I besought him, with tears, not to oppose my inspired decision to devote myself to the church. The feeling I thought I had for this holy vocation was in fact so sincere, and my faith in the designs and care of Providence was so fervent then, that I stated my almost certain hope to be no further expense to him; and to go on with my studies, all I asked was his consent and blessing.

My letter was a theme for my mother's eloquence. She believed my way to have been guided by angels and streaming with light like Jacob's ladder. My father, with less of a weakness for me, was nevertheless pious. He relented and allowed my mother to write to me that he supported my holy resolve. At the same time she sent me a little monetary help, which I used sparingly, and soon I was in a position to return as much as I had received. I had heard that the college of Clermont, much larger than the one in Mauriac, assisted their masters with ushers: I based my living on getting this work; but to be admitted I must put down my name as quickly as possible, and in spite of my fifteen years, gain the confidence of the masters by carrying things off with a high hand.

Furnished with good testimonials, I had only to present them to the prefect of Clermont College—they would be sufficient to have me sent to the philosophical course at once—and without examination; but that was not what I wanted. Praise in words, even the most fulsome words, makes only a vague impression; and I had to have something more striking and intimate; I wanted to be examined.

So I went to the prefect, and without saying where I came from, asked for his permission to enter for philosophy. "Where do you come from ?" he asked. "I come from Bort, father." "And where have you studied ?" Here I allowed myself to be a little indirect. "My master was a country curate," I answered. His eyebrows went up and he made a slight gesture of disdain; then opening an exercise book of themes, he suggested one in which there would be no difficulty at all. I wrote it in a flash and elegantly enough. "And you had," he said, reading it, "a country curate as your master?" "Yes, father." "This evening you will translate it." By chance it was part of Cicero's harangue that I had studied in rhetoric; so that I translated with ease and as quickly as I had done the theme. "So," he said again, reading my translation, "you studied with a country curate?" "You ought to have seen him," I said. "To see him still better, to-morrow I will get you to write a development of a theme." In this prolonged examination I thought there was a curiosity that might be favourable to me. The subject he proposed was also encouraging: it was a student's regrets and farewells at leaving his parents to go to college. What could have been more analogous to my situation and my heart's sensations? I can still remember the expression I gave to the feelings of son and mother. These words dictated by nature, whose eloquent simplicity art can never imitate, were moistened by my tears, and this the prefect noticed. But what astonished him most (because truth itself seemed invention there) was the place where, rising above myself, I made the young man speak to his father of the courage he felt he possessed to be one day, through work and application, the consolation, support and honour of his old age, and give back again to the other children what his education had cost him. "And you have studied with a country curate!" cried the Jesuit aloud. This time I was silent and only lowered my eyes. "And verse? has this country curate taught you to write that too?" I answered that I had some idea but little practice. "That's what I should be very glad to know," he said with a smile. "Come this evening to the class." The subject for the poem was "How dissimulation differs from deception." Perhaps he designedly offered me this opportunity for my excuses.

I endeavoured to show that dissimulation might be the purest fooling or innocent artifice; an ingenious art of amusing in order to instruct, and sometimes a sublime art in beautifying truth itself, making it more likeable, and touching and attractive, by giving it a transparent, flower-strewn veil. In deceit it was easy for me to describe the baseness of a soul that deceives in thought and feeling; the impudence of a crafty mind, which, in order to delude, alters and distorts the truth, and whose speech is full of fraud, malice, cunning and foulness.

"And now, tell me," said the clever Jesuit, "if it is dissimulation or deceit—this tale of a country curate who was your master; for I am pretty certain that it was with us at Mauriac that you studied?" "Although both are true, father, I agree that it would have been deceit if it had been my intention to deceive you; but in putting off telling you what you now know, I had no wish to disguise the truth or to leave you in error. It was necessary for me to be known better to you than through my testimonials. I have quite good ones to give you, and here they are. But on these testimonials and without an examination would you have granted my first request? and I have one to make which is much more essential to me. Whilst studying, I must be a tutor and you must be kind enough to let me earn my living by giving me scholars to teach. My family is poor and large; I have already cost them too much and will not be a burden on them any longer; and whilst waiting until I can help them, I ask you for what all men can demand in trouble without shame, work and bread." "But, my child," he said, "at your age, how can you make yourself heard and obeyed and respected by your equals?" "That is true; but, father, don't you think sorrow leaves an impression? Don't you think that it brings authority to one's judgment and matures one? Try my character, and you will find it serious enough to make my fifteen years be forgotten." "I will see," he said. "I will consider it." "No, father, there is nothing at all to consider. You must put me on the list of ushers now, and give me students. No matter which class; they will do their work, I will answer for that; and you will be satisfied with me." He promised me, although rather feebly; and with a note from him I went to study logic.

After the following day, I thought that the professor took some notice of me. The logic of Port Royal and the habit of speaking Latin gave me considerable advantage over my companions. I was eager to be thrust forward, and neglected nothing that might make me noticeable. However, weeks went by without the prefect giving me any news at all. Sometimes I found myself in his path and saluted him beseechingly, but he hardly noticed me. It even seemed that, having nothing good to tell me, he pretended not to see me. I would pass on very sadly; and in my room near the clouds, thinking over things, would eat my hermit's meal with tears; fortunately I had excellent bread.

A dear little Madame Clément, who lodged underneath me and who had a kitchen, was curious to know where mine was. She came to see me one morning. "Monsieur, I hear you go up to your room at mealtimes, and you are alone, you have no fire, and no one goes up after you. Forgive me, but I am uneasy about you."

I confessed that for the moment I was not very comfortable, but added that almost directly I would have plenty to live on; that I was in a position to teach and the Jesuit Fathers were going to help me. "Oh they!" she said, "your Jesuit Fathers bother themselves about quite other things! They soothe you with promises and let you pine away. Why don't you go to Riom to the Oratory Fathers? They will give you less fine words, but will do more for you than they promise." I need not tell you I was speaking to a Jansenist. Touched by her concern for me, I appeared to want to take her advice and asked for some information about the Oratory Fathers. "They are good people whom the Jesuits detest and want to crush. But it is dinner-time; come and eat some of my soup: I will tell you more." I accepted her invitation; and although her dinner was very frugal I never had a better one in my life: especially two or three little draughts of neat wine that she made me drink enlivened my spirits. There I learnt in one hour all that I needed to know of the Jesuit animosity against Oratory College—the jealous rivalry between the two colleges. My neighbour added that if I went to Riom they would be glad to have me. I thanked her for wishing to be so helpful; and strengthened by her will and my hopes, I went to see the prefect. It was a day when classes were not being held. He seemed surprised to see me and asked me coldly what brought me to him. This reception persuaded me that what my neighbour said was true. "I have come to take leave of you, father." "You are going away?" "Yes, father, I am going to Riom, where the Oratory Fathers will give me as many students as I want." "What, my child, you are leaving us! You, a pupil from our schools, an apostate!" "Alas! it is sad; but you can do nothing for me; and I have the assurance that these kind fathers . . ." "These kind fathers know only too well how to flatter and seduce credulous young people like you! But you can be very certain, my child, that they have neither the power nor the influence we have." "Then, father, will you have enough to give me work in order to live?" "Yes, I am thinking about it, and busy over it; and in the meanwhile I will provide for your needs." "What do you mean, father, by providing for my needs? You must know that my mother would deprive herself of everything rather than suffer a stranger to help me. But I will accept no help, not even from my family; I ask to live by my work. Give me the means to do it yourself, or I will go elsewhere." "No, no, you will not go," he answered. "I forbid you. Follow me; your professor has a high opinion of you; let us go and see him together." And immediately he took me to my professor. "Do you know, father," he said to him, "what was going to become of this child? They want him at Riom. The Oratorians, those dangerous men, wanted to make a proselyte of him. He was almost lost; we must save him." My professor was still more inflamed over the affair than the prefect. They both said marvellous things about me to all the masters of the college: thenceforward my fortune was made; I had a school, and in one month twelve scholars at four francs each put me in a position above all want. I was well-lodged and well-fed; and at Easter I had enough to dress myself decently as an abbé, which I desired ardently, to assure my father the better of the sincerity of my vocation, and to have a more serious existence in the college.

When I left my room, my neighbour, to whom I had told what they were doing for me, was not as pleased as I could have wished. "Oh," she said, "I would have been so much happier if you had gone to Riom. There the work is good and holy." I begged her to keep her kindness for me in case I needed it, and indeed in my opulence I sometimes went to see her.

My ecclesiastical coat, and the decorum it imposed on me, and still more that old desire of mine for personal consideration that Amalvy's example had left in my soul, had a fortunate effect on me, particularly that of making me severe and reserved in my college associations. I was in no haste to make friends, and had only a few. There were four of us, always the same four, in our amusements, that is to say, our walks. We shared the expense, the small expense, of a subscription to an old bookseller; and as good books are, thanks to heaven, most plentiful, we only read the best. The great orators and poets, the best writers of the last century, several of the present century, for the bookseller had few, went round from hand to hand; and during our walks, each remembered what he had gleaned from them; our conversations were nearly all about our reading. On one of our excursions to Beauregard, the country seat of the bishopric, we had the happiness of seeing the venerable Massillon. The welcome so full of kindness of this illustrious old man, the intensely tender impression his appearance and the tone of his voice made on me, is one of the sweetest memories I have of my youth.

At that time, when passions of the mind and soul have so sudden a mutual correspondence, when thought and feeling act and react on each other with so much rapidity, there is no one who, on meeting a great man, has not seen imprinted on his brow the characteristic traits of his mind or genius. So, amidst the wrinkles of his withered face and in the eyes that were fading, I saw still the expression of that searching eloquence so tender, at times so lofty and profoundly penetrating, that in the reading of his sermons had enchanted me. He allowed us to speak to him about them, and to pay him the homage of the holy tears they had made us shed.

After excessively hard work during my year of studying logic—having had to take, without counting my private study, three other classes, morning and evening, with my scholars—I went home for a short rest; and it was with some little feeling of pride, I confess, that I appeared before my father, well-dressed, my hands full of little presents for my sisters, and with some money in reserve. My mother cried with joy as she kissed me; my father received me kindly, but a little coldly: the rest of the family were delighted to see me.

Mademoiselle B——'s joy was saddened, and I was myself very confused and ill at ease, at appearing before her in the frock of an abbé. It is true, I had not been faithless in making the change; but I had been inconstant: and that was enough; I did not know how to behave with her. I consulted my mother over this delicate point. "My son, she has a right to feel some vexation and anger, and what is even more stinging, some coldness and disdain. You must endure it, and always show her the tenderest respect, and treat with infinite care the heart you have wounded."

Mademoiselle B—— was gentle and indulgent, but politely reserved; and she avoided all intimate talk with me. But before people we behaved well enough not to let it be seen that previously we had been more to each other.

My second year of philosophy was harder still than the first. My school had grown, and I gave it all my attention, and then in addition, having to hold the general theses, I had to work far into the night to prepare myself for this.

It was on the day I finished my philosophic course by this lecture in public that I heard of the fatal event which plunged me and my family into sorrow.

After my theses, we were having, according to custom, a feast in the professor's room, which ought to have been entirely joyful—and I saw only sadness in their congratulations. As I had got over the difficulties put before me quite well, I was surprised that my comrades and the professor too did not seem more pleased. "Oh, if I had done well," I said, "you wouldn't all be so sad." "Alas! my dear child," said the professor, "our sadness is very real and deep, and would to heaven it were only caused by a less brilliant success than you have had! I have to tell you of a much more cruel misfortune. Your father is no more." This blow felled me, and for a quarter of an hour I was speechless and colourless. Brought back to life and tears, I wanted to leave at once to save my poor mother from despair; but without a guide through the mountains night would surprise me: I had to wait for the dawn. I had twelve long leagues to ride on a hired horse, and, hurrying it on as much as possible, I only went very slowly. During this mournful journey, one thought only, one picture was incessantly in my mind, and all my soul's strength had to be gathered together to support it; but soon, indeed, I had to have the courage to look at it and face its dreary hideousness.

I arrived at the door of my house in the middle of the night. I knocked and said who I was, and immediately heard a plaintive murmur, a mingling of wailing voices. The whole family arose and came to open the door, and, entering, I was surrounded by this weeping family: mother, children, old women, all dishevelled and almost naked like ghosts—holding out their arms to me with cries that pierced and rent my heart. I do not know what strength I suddenly manifested—nature doubtless reserves it for extreme misfortune Never have I felt so much greater than myself. I had to take on myself an enormous load of sorrow, and I did not succumb under it. I opened my arms, my bosom, to this unhappy crowd and received them all. And with the certainty of a man inspired from heaven, without a sign of weakness or a tear—I, who weep so easily—said to them: "Mother, my brothers and sisters, we are suffering the greatest affliction; do not let us be overwhelmed. My children, you have lost a father and you have found one; I will be one to you; I am and wish to be; I accept all its duties; you are orphans no longer." At these words, tears streamed from their eyes, but much less bitter tears. "Oh, my son, my dear child, how well I knew you!" cried my mother, pressing me to her heart. And brothers and sisters, my aunts and grandmother, fell on their knees. This moving scene would have lasted the rest of the night had I been able to endure it. I was weighed down with fatigue and asked for a bed. "Alas!" said my mother, "there is only the bed . . ." Tears choked her voice. "Well, let me have it. I have no reluctance to lie there." I lay down, but did not sleep at all; my nerves were too shaken. All night I saw my father's image, as vividly and strongly impressed on my mind as if he had been present. Sometimes I thought I really saw him. I was not at all frightened; I held out my arms and spoke to him: "Oh, if it were only true! If you were only he who I seem to see. Could you but answer and say at least that you are satisfied with me!" After this long sleeplessness and this sad vision that was only a dream, it was sweet to see the day. My mother, who had slept no more than I had, waited for me to awake, as she thought. At the first sound she heard me make she came, and was frightened at the change in me. My skin seemed to have been dyed with saffron.

The doctor she summoned told her that this was one of the results of great concentrated griefs, and that mine might have most formidable consequences if I could not be diverted from it. "A journey—get him away—and that as soon as possible, that is the best and surest remedy I can give you: but do not suggest it as a pleasure: great sorrows have a loathing for that; unknown to him you must try and distract him and beguile him to a cure."

The old curé who had given me lessons during my vacations offered to have me with him, in the middle of the diocese, where his vicarage was, and to keep me there as long as was necessary for my health. But there had to be a reason for this journey, and one presented itself in my intention to take orders from my bishop before going further; for one of my hopes was the lucky chance of a simple benefice, which I would try to get. "I am going," said my mother, "to spend this year in clearing up and ordering the affairs of the house. You, my son, hasten to begin the career to which God calls you—make yourself known to our saintly bishop and ask his advice."

The doctor was right: there are sorrows more interesting than pleasure itself. Never, in the happiest times, when my father's house was so smiling and sweet, had I as much pain in leaving it as when it was in mourning. Of the six louis I had saved, my mother allowed me to leave three for the household, and still quite well off, I went to stay at my old friend's vicarage at Saint Bonet.

SECOND BOOK

THE tranquillity and silence of the hamlet of Abbeville, where I am writing these memoirs, recalls the calm that the village of Saint Bonet restored to my soul. The countryside was not as smiling or as fertile; neither the wild cherry nor apple tree adorned the harvests with their fruit-laden branches; but nature had ornament and richness there too. Vine-arbours were her porches, orchards her salons, and the turf her carpet; the cock had his court of love and the hen her young family; the chestnut-trees spread their shade majestically and scattered their bounty; the fields and meadows and woods, the herds and husbandry, the fishing in the little lakes, the wonderful landscape, were interesting enough to occupy an idle soul. Mine needed this repose after the long labour of my studies, and the cruel shock of my father's death.

My curé had books relative to his state—which was going to be mine too. I was destined for the pulpit, and he directed my reading; he made me take delight in religious books, and showed me wonderful examples of evangelical eloquence in the Fathers of the Church. The mind of this old man, naturally gay, was just sufficiently so each day with me to wipe out my black melancholy. Invisibly it was dispelled and joy came back to me. Twice a month he presided, in friendship, over the dinners the neighbouring curés had together—each giving one in his turn. Admitted to these banquets, it was in their company I learnt a taste for our poetry. Nearly all the curés wrote verse in French and invited each other by odes, whose sprightliness and naturalness charmed me. In imitation of them

I wrote several at which they deigned to smile. A happy band of poets where none were jealous, where no one was severe, and where each was pleased with himself and the others, it might have been a circle of Horaces and Anacreons.

When the time came to take orders, I went to the seminary and found myself in retreat with three Sulpiciens, with a dozen other candidates like myself. The meditation and silence that reigned amongst us, and the pious exercises that occupied us, at first seemed unfavourable to my intentions; but when I despaired of making myself known, the chance presented itself. Twice a day we had an hour's recreation in a little garden planted with lime-trees in alleys; my comrades amused themselves by playing quoits, and I, who disliked the game, walked by myself. One day, one of our superintendents came to me and asked why I isolated myself and didn't associate with my comrades. I answered that I was older, and that at my age you were glad to have a few moments to yourself to collect your thoughts, to sort and arrange your ideas; that I liked to go over my studies and reading, and having unfortunately a weak memory, I could only make up for it by mental prayer. This answer started a conversation. The Sulpicien wished to know where I had studied, what system I had used in my theses, and for what kind of reading I had most liking. I answered all this. You can imagine that a superintendent of the Limoges seminary did not expect, in questioning a student of eighteen, to find a great fund of knowledge, and that my little store must have seemed a small treasure to him.

On this day, after our initiation unto the ecclesiastical state, we, led by our three superintendents, went to pay our duty to the bishop. He received us all with equal kindness, but, when I was retiring with my comrades, he had me recalled. My heart shook.

"My child," he said, "you are not unknown to me; your mother has recommended you to me. She is an estimable woman, and I appreciate her very much. Where do you propose to go and finish your studies?" I answered that I had not yet made any plans; that I had just had the sorrow of losing my father; that my family, so numerous and poor, expected everything from me; and that I was going to try and see which university could provide me, during my course of studies, with the means of living and of helping my mother and our children. "And your children," he repeated, moved by the expression. "Yes, monseigneur, I am a second father to them, and if I do not die in the attempt, I am resolved to fulfil the duties of one." "Listen," he said; "a friend of mine is Archbishop of Bourges, one of our most virtuous prelates; I can send you to him; if he will, as I hope, consider my recommendation, all you need, for yourself and your family, is to deserve his protection, by using properly the gifts Heaven has given you." I thanked my bishop for his good-will; but asked him for time to tell my mother and consult her, feeling sure that she would be as grateful as I was.

My kind curé, of whom I took leave, was enraptured with joy when he learnt of what he called a gift from Heaven.

What would he have said had he been able to foresee that this Archbishop of Bourges was to be grand almoner, cardinal, minister with portfolio—and that in rhetoric, to which I intended to devote myself, I would have had most signal opportunities to distinguish myself under this ministry? It is certain that for a young churchman with a great deal of ambition, and enough talent, a very fine career was open to me. A foolish delicacy and a still more foolish dream stopped me from entering on it. I have more than once had cause to wonder how the web of our destiny knots and unknots itself, and how many fine and brittle threads compose the fabric.

Arrived at Linars, I wrote to my mother that I had juſt taken orders under moſt favourable auspices; that I had received the moſt touching marks of good-will from the bishop; that as soon as possible I would go and tell her about it. The same day I got, by messenger, a letter almoſt obliterated with tears. "Is it true," she asked, "that you have been mad enough to join the company of the Comte de Linars, the Marquis's brother, captain of d'Enghien's regiment? If this disaſter has happened to you, tell me; I will sell the little I have to free my son. O God, is this really my son!" Imagine the despair I was in on reading this letter. Mine had gone a roundabout way to Bort; my mother would only get it in two days, and she was diſtracted. I wrote quickly saying that what she had heard was a horrible lie; that such criminal folly had never entered my mind; that my heart was torn by her grief, and that I begged forgiveness for being the innocent cause of it; but that she should have known me better than to believe this absurd calumny, and that always she would see that my behaviour was not that of a libertine nor a young fool. The messenger left again at once; but as long as I could count the hours in which my mother was ſtill deceived, I was in agony myself.

If I remember, there were sixteen leagues from Linars to Bort; and although I had implored the messenger to go all night, how could I be sure he would take no reſt? It was impossible for me to take any, and my pillow was continually wet with tears, thinking of those my mother shed for me, when I heard the sound of horses in the court-yard. I rose. It was the Comte de Linars; I did not even give myself time to dress before going to him; but he foreſtalled me, and came to me sorrowfully. "Oh, monsieur, how guilty I will seem to you, because of an impudent jest that has put your family in despair, and in your mother's heart a sorrow I cannot alleviate! She thinks you have enlisted under me. She came, weeping, to throw herself at my feet, and to offer, in order to buy your discharge, her gold cross, her ring and purse, and all she had in the world. In vain I assured her that your enlistment was not true, quite vainly I protested this—she thought it was only my way of refusing to give you back. She still weeps. Leave immediately and reassure her yourself." "But, monsieur le Comte," I asked, "who can have given rise to this disastrous rumour?" "It was I, monsieur; I am in despair about it, I beg your forgiveness. The need to raise fresh recruits brought me to your town. I found several young people there, your college friends, who wanted to enlist, but still hesitated. I saw that it only needed your example to decide them. I succumbed to the temptation of telling them that they would have you as a comrade; that I had enlisted you; and the rumour was spread about." "Oh, monsieur," I cried indignantly, "is it possible for such a lie to come from the lips of a man like you!" "I deserve to be overwhelmed with the most shameful reproaches. But this deception, the consequences of which I did not imagine, has made known to me a mother's nature such as I have never seen. Go and console her; she needs you."

The Marquis de Linars, to whom his brother confessed his fault, and all the evil it had done, gave me a horse and guide, and I left the next day; but I left with a fever on me, for my blood was inflamed; and in the evening the paroxysm seized me, just when my guide had led me astray at the cross-roads. I shivered on my horse, and night would have descended on me in an hour, in open country, when I saw a man passing my way. I called him to find out where I was—if it were far to the village where my guide thought he was going. "You are more than three leagues away," he said, "and you are not on the road to it." But whilst answering, he recognised me; it was a boy from my town. "Is it you?" he said, calling me by name. "By what chance do I find you at this hour on this heath? You look ill. Where are you going to spend the night?" "And you?" I asked. "I am going to see an uncle of mine, who lives in a village not far from here." "And would your uncle be kind enough to give me a refuge for the night, for I need rest badly?" He said: "You will be poorly lodged with him, but very welcome." I allowed myself to be led there, and found bread and milk for my guide, hay for my horse, and for myself a good bed of fresh straw, and some toast and water for my supper. I did not need any more, for a paroxysm had come on, and it was a heavy one.

I found my mother fully reassured as to my conduct; but she was alarmed about my health when she saw me. I calmed her uneasiness; and indeed felt much better, thanks to the diet the curé had given me. We both wrote to thank them for their kind hospitality; and when sending back the mare on which I had come, with our letters, we put a few modest gifts, amongst which was a simple ornament for Marcelline; it was of no great value, but elegant and in good taste. After which, my health being visibly restored, we both occupied ourselves solely with my affairs. The bishop's protection and recommendations, and the prospects offered by it, seemed to my mother the most fortunate thing that could happen; and I thought so too. My star (and now I say my lucky star) made me change my mind.

I told my mother the Jesuit's remarks on the unpleasantness of going to Bourges to become a pensioner of the Archbishop. She had the same delicacy and pride as I, and our letters to the bishop were written in that spirit. All that remained was to consult her about my plan of becoming a Jesuit. I never had the courage. Neither her weakness nor mine could endure the discussion; to speak of it coolly, we had to be away from each other. I decided to write to her about it and went to Toulouse, still irresolute myself about what I was going to be. Shall I say that on the way I once more missed my chance? A mule-driver of Aurillac, who spent his days on the road from Clermont to Toulouse, willingly took charge of me. I went on one of his mules, and he most often walked on foot beside me. " Monsieur l'abbé, will you spend several days at my house, for business makes me halt there? In God's name, use that time to cure my daughter of her mad religiousness. I have only her, and not for anything will she marry. Her obstinacy makes me despair." It was a delicate commission: I thought it just amusing and undertook it willingly.

I confess I imagined that the abode of a man who trotted ceaselessly behind his mules, over the roughest roads, his body exposed to rain at one time and snow another, would be very poor. So that I was not a little surprised on entering his house to find it commodious, well furnished, most scrupulously clean; and to see a sort of gray sister, young, fresh, well made, come up to Pierre (that is the muleteer's name), kiss him, and call him father. The supper she served to us had no less an air of easy circumstances. The leg of mutton was tender, and the wine excellent. The room they gave me had almost a luxurious elegance in its simplicity. I have never been so softly couched. Before going to sleep, I reflected on what I had seen. " Is it just to spend a few hours of ease that this man torments and wears away the rest of his life in such painful labour?" I said to myself. " No, he is working to provide for a quiet easy old age; and this rest, the hope of which he enjoys, soothes his fatigue. But this only daughter whom he loves tenderly, for what whim has she dressed herself like a nun—young and pretty as she is? Why this gray frock, smooth linen, the gold cross on her breast, and wimple on her bosom? Her hair, which she hides under a head-band, is a pretty colour. The little one sees of her neck is white as ivory. And her arms—they too are pure ivory and made to perfection." At this point in my reflections I fell asleep, and the following day had the pleasure of breakfasting with the devout young person. She kindly asked about my sleep. "It was very sweet," I said, "but not peaceful; dreams disturbed it. And you, mademoiselle, did you sleep well?" "Not badly, thank heaven!" she said. "Did you dream too?" She blushed and said she rarely dreamed. "And when you dream, it is about angels?" "Sometimes about martyrs," she said smiling. "Doubtless of the martyrs you make." "I, I don't make any martyrs at all." "I swear you have made more than one, but you don't boast to yourself about it. As for me, when in sleep I see the heavens open, it is nearly always only of virgins I dream. I see them, some in white, some in bodice and petticoat of gray wool, that suits them better than the newest ornament. So simply arranged, nothing spoils the natural beauty of their hair or complexion; nothing shadows the radiance of the pure brows, or rosy cheeks; no folds disfigure their waists, but a narrow girdle makes and accentuates the smoothness. An arm moulded from the lily with a pretty, rose-fingered hand emerges from a simple modest sleeve; and what the wimple conceals is still more easily conjectured. But the pleasure I have in seeing these young girls in heaven is spoilt, I confess, by seeing them so badly placed." "Where do you see them, then?" she asked with embarrassment. "Alas! in a corner almoſt alone, and (what displeases me more) near the Capuchin Fathers." "Near the Capuchin Fathers?" she said, wrinkling her brow. "Alas! yes, almoſt forsaken; whilſt the noble mothers of families, surrounded by the children they have brought up, by the husbands they have made happy on earth, and the parents they comforted and rejoiced in their old age by assuring them of help, are in a place of eminence in sight of all heaven—shining with glory." "And the abbés," she asked wickedly, "where have they been put?" "If there are any, they will have perhaps lodged them in some corner far from the virgins." "Yes, I think so," she said, "and that is very right, for they would be very dangerous neighbours for them." This quarrel over our positions amused good-natured Pierre. Never had he seen his daughter so roused or talkative; for I had taken care to put into my allurements, as Montaigne says, a bitter-sweet point of ſtinging, flattering gaiety which seemed to anger her, yet for which she was grateful. Finally, on the eve of his and my departure for Toulouse, her father led me to his room alone, and said: "Monsieur l'abbé, I see perfectly well that you and my daughter will never agree without me. But this quarrel of nun and abbé muſt end. There is a good way to do that, and that is to throw both to the dogs—you this neck-band and she her round collar; and I have no doubt that if you want it, she won't need to be urged very long before she wants it too. As for me, for ten years in business I have done commissions for that excellent man your father, and as everyone tells me you are like him, I want to deal openly and cordially with you." Then, showing me ſtacks of crowns in the drawers of a cheſt he opened, he said: "Look, in business, only one word is necessary; this is what I have saved, what I ſtill save for my grandchildren, if my daughter gives me any; for your children, if you wish it and will make her wish the same."

I do not say that I was not tempted at the sight of this treasure. The offer was all the more seductive, for the good soul Pierre made no other condition but that I should make his daughter happy. "I will go on leading my mules," he said; "at each journey, as I pass, I will enlarge the pile of crowns, which you will enjoy. For me, my life is work and fatigue. I will go on as long as I have strength and health; and when old age curves my back and stiffens my joints, I will come and finish my life and rest by you." "Oh, my good friend, Pierre, who will have deserved this peace of a long happy old age better than you! But what are you thinking of? Wanting to give your daughter a husband who has already five children?" "You, monsieur l'abbé, five children at your age?" "Alas! yes. Have I not five brothers and sisters? Have they any father but me? It is on my possessions they must live, not on yours, and I must earn some for them." "And do you think you can earn with your Latin as I do my with mules?" "I hope so, but at least I will do for them all that lies in my power." "So you don't want my nun? She is pretty and especially now you have stirred her up." "Most certainly, she is pretty and lovable, and I am tempted by her more than your crowns. But I tell you, nature has already put five children in my arms; marriage would soon give me five others, perhaps more, for devout people are prolific, and that would be too much encumbrance." "It is a pity," he said; "my daughter will not want to marry." "I think I can assure you that she won't be so averse to marriage. I have made her see that mothers of families are far above virgins in heaven; and by choosing her a husband who will please her, it will be easy for you to inspire her soul with a fresh devotion." My prophecy was fulfilled.

Arriving in Toulouse, I went to see Father Noaillac. "Your business is well advanced," he said to me. "I have found several Jesuits here who know you, and who have joined with me. You have been proposed and accepted; after to-morrow you can join if you wish. The Superior expects you." I was a little surprised that he had hurried so, but without making any complaint, allowed myself to be taken to the Superior. I found him, indeed, willing to receive me as soon as I wished, if my vocation, he said, were sincere and certain. I answered that I had not had the courage to declare my resolution to my mother when leaving her, but that I would go no further without consulting her and asking her wishes: that I would wait until I had written to her and got her answer. The Superior thought this was right, and after leaving him I wrote.

The answer came very quickly; and, Great Heavens, what an answer! what eloquence! Not one of the illusions with which Father Noaillac had filled my head made any impression on my mother's mind. All she saw was the absolute dependence, the profound devotion and blind obedience to which her son was going to vow himself by taking the garb of a Jesuit. "And how can I believe that you will be mine? You will no longer be your own. What hope for my children can I found on one who will no longer have an existence of his own, but can be disposed of by a stranger in the twinkling of an eye? I am told that if for some whim of your superiors they wish to send you to India or China or Japan, and the head of the order sends you there, there is no considering, but without resistance or reply you must go. What, my son, did not God make you a free creature; hasn't He given you healthy judgment, a good heart and feeling mind; hasn't He endowed you with a will naturally upright and just, and the desires of a good man, that you lower yourself to the state of an obedient machine? Believe me, leave these vows and inflexible rules to those who feel they need fetters. I dare to tell you, I who know you so well, that the freer you are the more certain you will be to want only what is honest and praiseworthy. My dear son, remember that terrible yet precious moment—heart-rending as it is to my memory—when in the midst of your stricken family, God gave you strength to raise their hopes by declaring yourself their support. Do you make it better by making it a slave, this heart of yours which nature made capable of such impulses? And when it will have renounced the liberty to follow them, when nothing of yourself is yours, what will become of those resolutions never to forsake your brothers, sisters and your mother? You are lost to them: they expect nothing more from you. My children, your second father is going to die to the world and nature; weep for him! And I, desperate mother, I will weep for my son and for you whom he has abandoned. O God, it was this he contemplated at home with that treacherous Jesuit—unknown to me. He came to steal a son from a poor widow and a father from five orphans. Cruel, pitiless man! with what treacherous flattery he treated me. That is their spirit and character, they say. But you, my son, you who have never had a secret from me, you deceived me too. So he taught you deception? And your first attempt was to set me a trap. This noble and generous motive for refusing the help of a bishop was only an empty pretext to put me on the wrong scent and disguise your plans. No, nothing of all that could be yours: I would rather believe it was a spell that charmed your mind. I will not stop respecting and loving my son: I cling to those two feelings more than life. My son is intoxicated with ambitious hopes. He thought he was sacrificing himself for me and my children.

His young head was weak but his heart will always be good. He will not read this letter bathed in his mother's tears without hating the treacherous advice that betrayed him for a moment."

My mother was right: it was impossible for me to finish reading her letter without choking with tears and sobs. From that moment the idea of being a Jesuit fled from my mind, and I hurried to the Superior to say that I renounced it.

At Toulouse there was a hospice founded for students from the province of Limousin. In this hospice, called the college of Sainte Catherine, a nomination gave one a room and 200 livres income during the five years for taking a degree. When a vacancy occurred the incumbents put it to the ballot: a good and wise institution. My young fellow-countrymen kindly thought of me for one of these vacancies. In this college, where liberty had only one rule—that of decency—each person lived as he pleased; the porter and cook were paid out of our common expenses. Therefore, with economy, I could send my family the greater part of my earnings; and this saving, which grew every year with the growth of my school, became large enough to bring ease and comfort to my relatives. But whilst fortune gave me the happiest joys, nature was preparing the most heart-rending sorrow. However, I had yet some little time of prosperity.

Looking by chance through a collection of works crowned by the Academy of Jeux Floraux, I was struck by the richness of the prizes: they were flowers of gold and silver. I was not as struck by the beauty of the works that gained these prizes, and it seemed to me easy enough to do better. I thought of the pleasure of sending my mother these bouquets of gold or silver, and of the pleasure she would have in receiving them. From that came the idea and desire to be a poet. I had never studied the rules of our poetry. I went quickly to buy a little book which would teach me these rules, and, on the advice of the bookseller, acquired at the same time a copy of the "Odes of Rousseau." I pondered over both books and immediately searched my mind for some wonderful subject for an ode. I fixed on the "Invention of Gunpowder." I remember it began with these lines:

Toi qu'une infernale Euménide
Pétrit de ses sanglantes mains.

I could not get over my astonishment at having written such a lovely ode. I recited it in an intoxication of enthusiasm and pride, and in entering it for the competition I had not the slightest doubt of its winning the prize. It didn't; it didn't even win the consoling distinction of honourable mention. I was exasperated, and in my indignation wrote to Voltaire, and, sending him my work, cried to him for vengeance. It is known with what kindness Voltaire welcomed young people who claimed any talent for poetry: the French Parnassus was an empire whose sceptre he would yield to no one in the world, but he was pleased to see its subjects multiply. He sent me one of those replies he fashioned so gracefully and of which he was so liberal. The praise he gave my work consoled me completely for what I called the Academy's injustice, for its judgment weighed not a grain in the balance against the approbation of a man like Voltaire. But what flattered me very much more than his letter was his sending me a copy of his works, corrected in his own hand, as a gift to me. I was crazy with pride and joy, and ran all round the town and colleges with this present in my hand. In this way began my correspondence with the illustrious man, and a friendship which, lasting for thirty-five years, was kept up without change until his death.

I continued to work for the Academy of Jeux Floraux, and each year won some prizes; and for me the least of these little literary triumphs has a more reasonable and touching interest than those of vanity, and because of that, this scene deserves to have a place in these memories I transmit to my children.

As, in man's estimation, everything is only appreciated by comparison, and as in Toulouse there was no more brilliant literary success than that of the lists of the Jeux Floraux, the public assembly of the Academy for the distribution of prizes had a very solemn magnificence and a vast concourse of people. Three parliamentary deputies presided; the magistrates and all the town council attended in their robes; the whole hall, arranged as an amphitheatre, was filled with the finest people in the town and the prettiest women. The brilliant youth of the university occupied the pit round the academic circle: the hall, which was vast, was decorated with festoons of flowers and laurel, and as each prize was awarded the town trumpets made the Capitol resound with the shrill brilliance of victory.

That year I had sent in five works—an ode, two poems and two idylls. The ode failed to gain the prize; and none was given. The two poems were equal: one took the prize for epic poetry, and the other the prose prize which was vacant. One of the two idylls won the prize for pastorale poetry and the other, honourable mention. So the three prizes, the only ones the Academy was going to bestow, I was going to receive. I went to the assembly thrilling with a vanity I cannot recall afterwards without confusion and pity for my youth. It was much worse when I was weighted with my flowers and crowns. But where is the poet of twenty whose head would not have been turned by such an event? There was silence in the hall; and after the eulogy to Clemence Isaure, foundress of the Jeux Floraux—the unfailing eulogy, spoken each year at the foot of her statue—came the distribution of prizes. First, it was announced that that for the ode was held back. Now it was known that I had sent an ode in to the competition: they also knew that I was the author of an uncrowned idyll: they sympathised with me and I let them. Then was called the title of the winning poem; and at the words, "Let the author come forward," I rose and went forward and received the prize. There was applause as usual, and I heard said around me: "He failed in two, but not the third; he has more than one arrow to his bow!" I seated myself modestly again, to the sound of trumpets; but soon another poem was announced to which the Academy thought they ought to award the prize for rhetoric, rather than reserve it. The author was called, and again I arose. The applause was redoubled, and the reading of this poem was listened to with the same favour as the first. I had gone back to my place when the idyll was given out, and the author asked to come and receive his prize. They saw me get up for the third time. Then, had I written "Cinna," "Athalie" and "Zaïre" I would not have been more applauded. There was a great tumult: men lifted me over the crowd in their hands, and women kissed me. Light bubble of vainglory! Who knows it better than I, since reading them forty years later with indulgence, among these attempts people thought so brilliant—there was not one which seemed to me worthy to be put in a collection of my works. But what still moves me keenly about this day that was so flattering to me I am about to tell you.

From the midst of these noisy, excited people two great black arms were raised and stretched out to me. I looked and recognised my master of the third class, kind Father Malosse, who, separated from me for more than eight years, found himself at this fête.

I threw myself headlong, pushed my way through the crowd and fell into his arms with my three prizes. "Here, father, they are yours; I owe them to you!" The good Jesuit's eyes filled with tears of joy, and I felt his pleasure more acutely than the noise of my triumph.

These literary amusements, although very seductive to me, did not take me away from my real occupations. I gave to poetry my moments of leisure and my walks; but at the same time applied myself assiduously to my studies and my school. After my second year of philosophy, not being able to make my Jesuit professor teach us the Newtonian physics, I decided to go and study at the school of lay-brothers. Their college, called the Esquile, had two excellent men as professors of philosophy; but one of these, and he was mine, with much learning and a mind, had too great a tendency to indolence, either in his character or through a weak constitution. He found it useful to have in me a pupil who, having already taken my degree in philosophy, could spare him from time to time the fatigue and boredom of working with his class. "Go to the reading desk," he said, "and make easy to them what you grasp so easily." This praise repaid me well for the trouble I took: for it gave me the confidence of the students, and made the boarders in the college want to have me as a tutor—an excellent and substantial windfall.

When I went to ask the archbishop to get me what is called a dimissory letter, and to be ordained by him, I found his mind full of prejudice against me: "I was just a gallant abbé, absorbed in poetry, paying court to women, writing songs and idylls for them, and sometimes even going at dusk to walk and take the air by the stream with pretty ladies." This archbishop was la Roche-Aymon, not at all a squeamish man in his political morals; but affecting an extreme rigour for sins that were not his own; he wanted to send me to do penance in the most sordid and bigoted of the seminaries.

My association with Voltaire, to whom I wrote sometimes and sent my essays, and who answered me willingly, had done not a little to change my feeling for the ecclesiastical life.

Voltaire, whilst making me hope for success in poetry as a career, urged me to go to Paris, the only school of taste where one could cultivate a talent. I told him that Paris was too large a theatre for me and that I would be lost in the crowd; that besides, having been born without wealth, I should not know what to do there; that at Toulouse I could have a comfortable and respectable existence, and that unless I could have one something like it in Paris, I should have to resist my desire to go and pay my homage to the great man who summoned me.

Soon, however, I should have to decide one way or another. Literature at Paris, the bar at Toulouse or the seminary at Limoges: that is what was offered me, and each one seemed dull and uncertain to me. Irresolute, I felt the need of consulting my mother: I did not think she was ill, but knew that she was ailing; I hoped that the sight of me would give her back some health, and I went to see her. How delightful and charming this journey would have been if this dear hope had been fulfilled!

I left my brother at Toulouse, and departed on a little horse I had bought; and on a holiday arrived at the hamlet of Saint Thomas, where my farm was. My eldest sister and the daughter of my aunt from Albois had walked there. I rested and changed my clothes, for I had the dress of an abbé in a bundle in my valise. If we forded the river, there was just one meadow to pass through to get from Saint Thomas to Bort. I made the little girls cross the river on my horse and did the same myself, and we reached the town by this lovely walk. Forgive these details; I repeat once more that this is written for my children.

As I passed the church vespers were being said, and on the way I had met one of my former schoolfellows, Odde, the very same who has since married my sister, and he spread the news at church of my arrival. First my friends, our neighbours, then gradually everybody drifted away: the church was empty, and soon my house was full and surrounded by a crowd that had come to see me. Alas! I was very distressed, for I had just kissed my mother, and in her emaciation, her cough and the crimson that burned in her cheeks, I thought I saw the illness that killed my father. It was only too true that it had attacked my mother, and before she was forty. This fatal consumption, contagious in my family, has made cruel ravages in it. I tried as much as possible to conceal from my mother the grief that seized me. She, who knew that she was ill, forgot it, or seemed to forget it, and only spoke of her joy. I have since learnt that she insisted that the doctor and my aunts should give me hope as to her condition, and not let me be uneasy. They all agreed to deceive me, and avidly my soul received the sweet and hopeful illusion. But I return to the inhabitants of our town. My mother's delight in my academic successes was shed all around her. The silver flowers I sent her, and which she put each year on Corpus Christi Day on the wayside altar, had given people in my town an unaccountable idea of me. These people, who since have perhaps been corrupted like so many others, were then goodness itself. They vied with each other in loading me with kindnesses. The women delighted in reminding me of my infancy; the men listened to me as if every word ought to be gathered up; and they were but simple words dictated by my heart's emotion. As everyone came to congratulate my mother, Mademoiselle B—— came also with her sisters, and, as it was the custom, she had to let the new arrival kiss her. But instead of encouraging, as her sisters did, the innocent kiss I gave them, she shunned it by gently withdrawing her cheek. I felt the difference and was acutely hurt by it.

Of the three weeks I spent with my mother, it was impossible for me not to steal a few moments from where my feelings held me, to give them to friendship. My mother insisted on it, and so as not to deprive our friends of the pleasure of having me, she came herself to the fêtes they gave me. These fêtes were dinners to which we were invited turn and turn about. And, continually absorbed in and touched by all that was said to her son and what her son replied, watching my looks, and anxious at every turn as to how I would respond to the attentions that assailed me, now on this hand and now on the other, these long dinners were a mental exertion and a painful effort for her frail organs. Our conversations alone, while interesting her more, were still more fatiguing. I tried hard to manœuvre them with long silences and long stories, or to curtail the dialogue in order to launch out into musing; but as she was just as animated in listening to me as in speaking, it was just as harmful to her health, and I could not see the glitter in her eyes of the fire that consumed her blood without the most anguished emotion.

Finally I spoke to her of the abatement in my ardour for entering the church, and how I hesitated about choosing another status. Then she seemed calm and spoke coolly:

" The church imposes two essential duties, those of being pious and chaste; one is only a good priest at this cost; and on those two points you must examine yourself. If you go to the bar, I exact from you your most inviolate promise that you will only affirm what you believe to be true, and that you will never defend anything you don't think right. With regard to the other career that M. de Voltaire asks you to follow, I think your precaution of being certain of a situation that will leave you time to learn and acquire greater talent is wise. For you must not flatter yourself; what you have done is little. If M. de Voltaire can get you this honest, free and assured position, go, my son, and take the chance of glory and fortune; I would like it very much; but never forget that the most honourable and worthiest companion of genius is virtue." Thus spoke this astonishing woman who had never had any other education but that of the convent at Bort.

As soon as I had left her I let myself sink into the deepest distress; and all the memories that accompanied me on my journey conspired to overwhelm me. "In a short while I shall be without the mother who has lived only for me since I was born; this adored mother whom I feared to displease as I did God—and still more than I feared to displease God, if I may say such a thing," for I thought of her much oftener than I thought of God; and when I had to conquer a temptation or repress some passion, I always thought of my mother being present. "What would she say if she knew what I was thinking! How ashamed and sad she would be!" Such were the thoughts with which I checked myself, and at once my reason regained control, and, helped by nature, did with my heart what it wished. Those who, like me, have known such tender filial love, do not need to be told the sadness and despondency of my soul. However, I still clung to a slender hope: it was too precious not to hold on to to the last minute.

So I went to complete my course of studies; and as I entered my name for my first terms at the school of ecclesiastical law, in order to have two objects, it is probable that my subsequent choice would have been the bar. But towards the end of this year a little note from Voltaire decided me to leave for Paris. He wrote to me: " Come, and come without uneasiness. M. Orri, to whom I have spoken, has undertaken to look after you." Signed, Voltaire. Who was M. Orri? I had no idea. I went and asked my friends in Toulouse and showed them the letter. " M. Orri," they cried, " why, *cadédis!* he is the *contrôleur général* of finance. Why, dear friend, your fortune's made; you will be *fermier-général.* Remember us in your glory. A protégé of the minister, it will be easy for you to gain his esteem, his confidence and favour: soon you will be at the fountain-head of all favours. Dear Marmontel, direct a few little streams to us. A small 'filet du Pactole' will satisfy our ambition." One wanted a general receivership, another would be content with a private receivership, or some other position worth two or three thousand little crowns; and all this depended on me.

I had also in my reveries two copious sources of pleasant illusions. One was the idea of my fortune, and if heaven preserved my mother, the hope of bringing her to Paris and having her there; the other was the superb and fantastic picture I had made of Paris, where all that was not magnificent was at least of a noble elegance or a beautiful simplicity. One of these illusions was destroyed as soon as I arrived in Paris, and the other was not long in fading also. On arriving I lodged at the baths of Julien, and on the morning of the following day I was at Voltaire's bedside.

THIRD BOOK

YOUNG people born with some talent and love of the fine arts, who have come close to the men celebrated in the art which is their own study and delight, will know the agitation, the chill, the sort of religious terror I felt on going to see Voltaire.

Convinced that I ought to be the first to speak, I twisted and turned my opening phrase in twenty different ways and was satisfied with none. He extricated me from this agony. On hearing me announced he came towards me, and, holding out his arms, said: "My friend, I am so happy to see you. However, I have some bad news for you: Monsieur Orri is disgraced." I could hardly have tumbled from a greater height nor with a more sudden and unforeseen fall; but I was not at all giddy. I am naturally weak and am always astonished at the courage that comes to me in great moments. "Very well, monsieur," I said, "I must just fight against adversity. I have known it for a long time and have grappled with it." "I like to see that confidence in your own power," he said. "Yes, my friend, the truest and best resource of a writer is in his own gifts; but whilst waiting for yours to get you a living—I speak as a friend and straightforwardly—I want to provide for everything. I haven't brought you here to have you abandoned. From this moment, if you need money, tell me: you must have no other creditor than Voltaire." I thanked him for his kindness, assuring him that for some time at least I would not need it, and that if necessary I would come to him most trustfully. "You promise that and I rely on you," he said; "in the meantime for what are you going to work?"

"Alas! I don't know at all; it is for you to say." "For the theatre, my friend; the stage is the finest of all careers; by writing for the theatre you can gain fame and fortune in one day. It only needs one success to make a young man both rich and famous; and if you work well you will have success." "I am all eagerness," I answered, "but what shall I write for the stage?" "A fine comedy," he said decisively. "But, monsieur, how can I paint portraits when I don't know any faces?" He smiled at this answer. "Well, write tragedies then." I replied that tragic characters were a little more familiar to me, and that I would like to try. And thus passed my first interview with this illustrious man.

Leaving him, I found lodgings at nine francs a month near the Sorbonne, in the Rue des Maçons, at an eating-house keeper's, who for eighteen sous gave me quite a good dinner. Part of it I kept for my supper, and I was well fed. However, my fifty crowns would not have gone very far: I found an honest bookseller who was willing to buy my translation of "The Rape of the Lock" for a hundred crowns, which he gave me in promissory notes, and these were not ready money. A Gascon whom I had met in the café discovered for me a grocer in the Rue Saint André des Arcs, who agreed to take my notes in payment if I would buy his goods. I bought a hundred crown's worth of sugar from him and begged him to resell it for me. I lost little on this; and my fifty crowns from Montauban on one hand, and on the other my two hundred and eighty livres of sugar, put me in a position to go on until the reaping of the Academic prizes without borrowing from anyone. Eight months of food and lodging would not amount to more than two hundred and eighty livres. For extra expenses there was a hundred and forty-two livres left. That was quite enough, for by keeping to my bed I would use little wood in the winter. So I could work until St. Louis's Day without uneasiness; and if I carried off the prize of the French Academy, which was five hundred livres, I would get to the end of the year. This calculation upheld my courage.

My first work was the "Study of the Art of the Theatre." Voltaire lent me some books. Aristotle's Poetics," the dissertations of Pierre Corneille on the three unities, his investigations, the Greek theatre, our modern tragic writers—all these were rapidly and greedily devoured. I was aching to try my gifts; and the first subject my impatience made me seize upon was the revolution of Portugal. I wasted precious time on it; the political interest of this event was too weak for the theatre, and weaker still was the way in which I had hastily conceived and carried out my plot. However, several scenes that I read to an actor, a man of intelligence, made him predict well of me. But he told me it was necessary to study the art of the theatre in the theatre itself, and advised me to persuade Voltaire to gain me free entry to it. "Roselli is right," said Voltaire, "the theatre is a school for all of us; it must be open to you, and I should have thought of it sooner." My admittance to the Théatre Français was freely granted; and I never missed a day in going there to learn. I cannot tell you how this unceasing study hastened the development and advance of my ideas, and the little talent I might have. I never came back to the performance of a tragedy without some pondering on the means of achieving the art, or without renewed ardour in my imagination and mind and style.

It was at this time that I saw at Voltaire's house the man of all the world who had most attraction for me—the good, virtuous and wise Vauvenargues. Treated cruelly by nature from the physical side, he was one of her rarest masterpieces from the point of view of mind. In him I seemed to see a weak and suffering Fénelon. He showed me much kindness, and I easily gained permission to go and see him. I could make a wonderful book of these conversations, had I been able to collect them. There are some traces of them in the collection he has left of his thoughts and meditations; but eloquent and touching as he is in his writings, he was still more so in his talks with us. I say with us, for most often I found myself there with a man who was quite devoted to him, which alone would soon have gained my respect and trust. It was that same Beauvin who since has given to the stage the tragedy of the Chérusques; a man of sense and taste, but of an indolent nature; epicurean in character, but almost as poor as I was. As our feelings for the Marquis de Vauvenargues agreed so perfectly, it made a sort of sympathy between us. We met every evening after the theatre in the café Procope, the court of criticism and the school for young poets, in order to study the mood and the taste of the public. There we always talked together, and on the days when there was no performance at the theatre, we spent our after-dinner hour in solitary walks. Thus every day we became more necessary to each other, and every day felt more regret at leaving each other. At last he said: "Why should we leave one another? Why shouldn't we live together? The fruiterer with whom I lodge has a room for you; and sharing expenses will cost us much less." I answered that this arrangement would please me very much, but that for the moment I must not think of it. He insisted and pressed me so strongly that I had to explain the cause of my inability. "My exactness in paying my host has gained me a credit I should find very difficult to get elsewhere, and which I shall need all the time perhaps." Beauvin, who had a hundred crowns, told me not to worry, that he could advance me some, and that he had a plan which might enrich us. On my side I told him all my hopes and resources. I told him what I was going to send to the competition of the French Academy, and he thought it was as good as having gold. I showed him the plot and first scenes of my tragedy; he prophesied success for it, and then that would indeed be fame!

The Marquis de Vauvenargues lived at the Hotel de Tours, in the little Rue du Paon, and opposite was the house of Beauvin's fruiterer. So there I was, housed with him. His plan of writing a periodical journal between us was not as successful as he had hoped; we had neither gall nor venom; and as this newspaper was neither the untrue, unjust critic of good works, nor the bitter mordant satire of good authors, it had little sale. Nevertheless, with the help of this casual money and the Academy prize, which I was fortunate enough to gain, we got to the autumn, I ruminating tragic verse, and he dreaming of his loves. He was ugly, bandy-legged and quite middle-aged, and he was the beloved lover of a young Artésienne of whom he always spoke with the tenderest regrets; for he suffered the torments of absence, and I was the echo to his sighs. Although much younger than he, I had other cares on my mind. The most burning of these was our inn-keeper's reluctance to give us credit. The baker and fruiterer were still quite willing to furnish us with bread and cheese. There were our suppers—but from one day to the next our dinners were precarious. One hope remained: Voltaire, who suspected that I was more proud than opulent, wanted to have the little poem that had been honoured by the Academy printed, so that I might have the profit of it, and he had compelled a bookseller to undertake with me the cost of a prepaid printing. But whether the bookseller had made little out of it, or whether he liked his own profit better than mine, he said he had nothing to give me—and that at least half of the edition was still on his hands. "Well," said Voltaire to him, "give me what you have left; I will easily find a sale for it." He went to Versailles, where the court was; and there, as the subject proposed by the Academy was a panegyric on the King, Voltaire took it on himself to distribute this eulogy, estimating the gain to the author at his own pleasure. It was on this sale that I was counting, without overrating it beyond all measure, but Voltaire did not succeed.

Finally our situation became such that one evening Beauvin said to me, sighing: "My friend, all our resources have sunk so low that we haven't even anything to pay the water-carrier." I saw he was dejected, but I wasn't at all. "Have the baker and the fruiterer refused us credit?" I asked him. "No, not yet." "Then all is not lost," I answered; "we can easily do without the water-carrier." "How?" "How? egad! by going ourselves to get water from the fountain." "You would have the courage?" "Without any doubt—I would! That needs a lot of courage! It is night-time; and even if it were day, where is the disgrace in doing things for oneself?" So I took the jug, and went proudly to fill it at the neighbouring fountain. Coming back, jug in hand, I saw Beauvin coming towards me with open arms and an air of blooming happiness. "My friend, she is here, it is she! She has come! She has left everything—her home, her family, to come and find me. Isn't that love?" Motionless with astonishment, and my jug still in my hand, I looked and saw a great big fresh girl, well-built, quite pretty, although a little snub-nosed, who greeted me without embarrassment. All at once, the contrast of this romantic episode with our situation made me give such a shout of laughter that they were both dumbfounded. "You are welcome, mademoiselle; you could not," I said to her, "have chosen a better moment, nor come more opportunely." And when the first civilities were over I went down to the fruiterer's. "Madame," I said to her gravely, "this is a very special day, a holiday. You must, if you please, help us do the honours of the house, and widen a little the acute angle of the cheese you give us for supper." "And what is that woman doing here?" she asked. "Oh, madame, it is a miracle of love, and you must never ask for an explanation of miracles. All that you and I need know is that to-night we must have a third piece of that good Brie cheese, for which we will soon pay you—if God wills." "Yes," she said, "if God wills; but if one hasn't a farthing it is hardly the time to think of love."

A few days after, Voltaire, arriving from Fontainebleau, filled my hat with crowns, saying that it was the profit from the sale of my poem. Although it would have been pardonable for me to let a kindness be done to me in my distress, I took the liberty of showing him he had sold the little work much over its value; but he made me understand that the people who had paid so nobly were such as neither he nor I could refuse. Several of Voltaire's enemies would have liked me to fall out with him because of that. I did nothing of the sort; and with the crowns, which it would have been unmannerly to refuse, I went and paid all my debts.

Beauvin had received some help from his home; I could not get any from mine, and would soon be at the end of my money. It was neither right nor possible, because of his new way of life, that we should share our expenses much longer.

At this crisis, one of the cruellest of my life, and during which my pillow was soaked with tears every night, I regretted the comfort and tranquillity I had enjoyed at Toulouse. I do not know if it was the lucky influence of my star, or Voltaire's good opinion of me, that made a woman, whose memory I reverence, want me to undertake the finishing of her grandson's education. In every way the memory of this event ought to be dear to my heart—it shed such inestimable happiness in my life and gave me years of wonderful friendship.

A director of the East India Company, called Gilly, interested in some maritime commerce which at first made him wealthy and then ruined him, had, in his widowerhood, a son and a daughter of whom his mother-in-law, Madame Harenc, had willingly taken charge. It is impossible to imagine a woman of her age could be more lovable than Madame Harenc; and to this lovableness was added the greatest good sense, rare prudence and solid virtue. At first sight she was repulsively ugly; but soon all the charm of mind and character pierced through this ugliness, and made one—not forget it—but love it. Madame Harenc had an only son, as ugly as she, but just as lovable. This was M. de Presle, who is still alive, I think, and who for a long time has been distinguished for his taste and intelligence amongst amateurs of art. Their circle of acquaintances, chosen with care, had a quality of intimacy, of sureness, a peaceful and sometimes laughing serenity, and the most perfect harmony of feeling, taste and thought. A few women, always the same and tenderly attached to each other, adorned it: there was the lovely Desfourniels, whose regular, exquisite, and inimitably subtle features were the despair of the cleverest painters, and for whom nature seemed to have carefully and expressly made a soul to match so beautiful a body; there was her sister, Madame de Valdec, also lovable, but not so beautiful—then the blissful mother of that unhappy de Tessart whom we saw slaughtered at Versailles with the other Orleans prisoners; there was the young Desfourniels, since Comtesse de Chabrillant, who without having the beauty or disposition of her mother, mingled such attractiveness with a certain tartness in her wit, that one easily forgave her vivacity for her sometimes too stinging shafts. A Demoiselle Lacome, an intimate friend of Madame Harenc, who had a sweet and wholesome reasonableness that kept her friendly with all these people. M. de Presle, interested in all literary novelties, made an exquisite collection of them and gave us the first-fruits of it. The Monsieur de Lantage, in whose château I have just stayed in this valley, and his elder brother, a man of wit and devoted admirer of Rabelais, brought us the best of the old-time gaiety. I will not forget, whilst speaking of this charming company, kind M. de l'Osilière, the most sincerely philosophical man I have known after M. de Vauvenargues, and who made one think of la Fontaine because of the contrast of his wisdom with the naïve candour of his soul and speech.

That was where I was summoned, and soon became beloved as a child of the house. Judge of my happiness when, to so much that was pleasant, was added the joy of having as a pupil a well-bred young man, of untouched innocence, perfectly docile, with enough intelligence and memory never to lose anything of my teaching. He died before coming of age, and in him nature destroyed one of her loveliest works. He was handsome as Apollo, and as far as I could see he never suspected his beauty. It was with him, and without stealing one moment that I owed to his studies, that I finished my tragedy. That year I gained the prize for poetry once more, and I would count it amongst the happiest of my life, had not the death of my mother plunged me into grief. All the comfort and consolation so great a sorrow could have I found in Madame de Harenc. I left her when my pupil's father recalled him, intending him to have a different sort of education; but ever since, and until this estimable woman died, she loved me both in her home and mine.

My tragedy being finished, it was time to submit it to Voltaire's corrections; but Voltaire was at Cirey. The wisest thing would have been to await his return to Paris, and I knew that perfectly well. What a help the scrutiny and criticism and advice of such a master would have been! But the more my work would have gained by passing under his eye, the less it would have been mine. Perhaps also, by demanding more of me than I was able, he would have discouraged me. These reflections made me decide what to do, and I went to the actors and asked them to hear my play.

The reading was listened to with much kindness. The first three acts and the fifth were fully approved, but they did not disguise from me that the fourth was weak. At first I had had, for this fourth act, an idea that seemed dangerous to me, and which I had abandoned. I suddenly realised that prudence had made me wanting in passion, and my courage returned. I asked for three days in which to work, and a reading for the fourth. I slept little in the interval, but I was well repaid for this long wakefulness by the success of my new act at the reading, and the high opinion that such rapid and successful work gave to my talent. Then began the tribulations of an author, and the first was the distribution of parts.

When the actors had voluntarily granted me free admission to the theatre, Mademoiselle Gaussin had been the most eager to get it for me. She always played the princesses; she excelled in all parts needing tenderness, and the unaffected expression of love and sorrow. Lovely, with a most touching quality of beauty, and a tone in her voice that went to the heart, a tearful glance of inexpressible charm, she left nothing to be desired when she was correctly cast; and the lines of Orosmane to Zaïre—

were inspired by her. You can judge by that how the public loved her, and how sure she was of their favour. But in parts demanding ardour, force and tragic passion, her talent was too weak; and this voluptuous softness, which suited tender parts so well, was quite contrary to the strength my heroine required. However, Mademoiselle Gaussin did not conceal the fact that she wanted this part: she showed it in the most flattering and seductive way, exhibiting the liveliest interest at the reading, in both play and author.

At this time new tragedies were rare, and rarer still rôles which might be successful; but her most burning motive was to take the part from an actress who was always taking them from her. Jealousy of talent never inspired more hatred than the lovely Gaussin had for the youthful Clairon. The latter had not the same charm of face, but she had the features, the voice, look and action, and, above all, the ardour and energy of character all suited to express violent passions and noble sentiments. Since she had captured the parts of Camille, Didon, Ariane, Roxane, Hermione and Alzire, they had to be yielded to her. Her acting was not then moderated and controlled as it was later, but she already had all the sap and vigour of a great talent. So that there was no hesitation between her and her rival for a part of force and ardour and enthusiasm, such as that of Arétie; and in spite of my reluctance to disoblige the one, I did not hesitate to offer it to the other. Gaussin could not contain her vexation. She said: "It is well known by what kind of fascination Clairon makes herself preferred." Most certainly she was wrong; but Clairon, stung in her turn, compelled me to follow her into her rival's box, and there, without having warned me of what was going to happen: "Look, mademoiselle, I have brought him, and to show you if I have seduced him or even asked him to make the choice he has, I declare to you and to him too, if I accept his rôle it will only be from your hand." With these words she threw the manuscript on the dressing-table and left me there.

I was then only twenty-four, and found myself alone with the most beautiful person in the world. Her trembling hands pressed mine and her lovely eyes sought mine beseechingly. "What have I done to you," she said in her sweet voice, "to deserve the humiliation and sorrow you have caused me? When M. Voltaire asked to have you admitted to the theatre I was your spokesman. When you read your play, no one felt its beauty more than I. I listened attentively to the part of Arétie, and was too touched by it not to hope to render it as I felt it; why deprive me of it? It belongs to me by seniority and perhaps by some other title. You do me an injury in giving it to anyone else, and I doubt whether it will be any advantage to you. Believe me, a strained declamation is not suitable to that part. Reflect well: I want my own success, but yours none the less; it would be a great joy to me to have contributed to it."

I confess I had to make a painful effort. My eyes, ears and heart were exposed, defenceless, to the sweetest enchantments. Enraptured in every sense, moved to the depths of my soul, I was about to yield, to fall at the feet of her who seemed ready to welcome me—but the fate of my work, my one hope, the existence of my poor children, hung on this; and the choice of complete success or a failure was so vividly present in my mind that this anxiety was greater than all the other emotions that shook me.

"Mademoiselle," I answered, "had I been fortunate enough to have written a part such as Andromaque, Iphigenia, Zaïre, or Inez, I would be at your feet imploring you to beautify them still more. No one feels better than I the magic you add to the expression of moving sorrow, or to a timid and tender love: but unfortunately the plot of my play could not lend itself to such a character; and although the powers needed for my part are less rare, less precious, than the lovely nature with which you are endowed, you must admit yourself that they are quite different. Perhaps one day I shall have the opportunity to use, and successfully, the sweet accents of your voice, your bewitching glances, eloquent tears and divine beauty in a part worthy of you. Leave the perils and risks of my début to her who wishes to run them; and whilst keeping the honour of having yielded the part to her, avoid the dangers which in acting you would share with me." "That is enough," she said, concealing her vexation; "you wish it; I will give her the part." Then, taking the manuscript from her dressing-table, she went down with me, and finding Clairon in the green-room, said ironically to her: "I give you, and without regret, the part in which you expect so much success and glory. I agree with you—it will suit you much better than me." Mademoiselle Clairon took it with a proud modesty; and I, with lowered eyes, silently let the moment go by. But that evening at supper with my actress, I expressed freely the torment she had put me to. She felt quite deeply the fidelity with which I had endured that test; and then was born the enduring friendship which has grown old with us.

This part was not the only one that harassed me: the actor to whom I had destined the part of Denys the father, Grandal, refused it, and would not play any part but the young Denys. So I had to give the former to an actor called Ribou, a younger man than Grandal. Ribou was handsome and well made, and his movements were not wanting in nobility, but he lacked intelligence and education—to such a point that his part had to be explained in common language, and shown to him word by word as if he were a child. However, by dint of trouble and lessons I got him into a state of acting it passably; and with certain disguises of costume, he played the part well enough so as not to destroy the dramatic illusion by his youth.

Then came the time for rehearsals. And then began the judgment of the connoisseurs. I have spoken of the fourth act, which I myself, at first, had thought too dangerous—they hit on this one particularly. The critical moment was when Denys the younger holds his mistress as hostage in his father's palace in order to appease the agitators. Mademoiselle Clairon had heard that this was the rock on which the play would founder and be stopped. She proposed to collect at her house a small number of people of taste whom she herself consulted; to read my play to them, and without warning them of the situation that was troubling us, see what they thought of it. I agreed, as you can well believe, and the council was assembled. This is how it was composed. There was d'Argental, Voltaire's tool, and the enemy of all talent that threatened to succeed. There was the Abbé Chauvelin, the Jesuit denunciator to whom this hateful rôle gave some fame; it is of him that was said: "*Quelle est cette grotesque ébauche? Est-ce un homme? est-ce un sapajou? Cela parle*," etc. There was the Comte de Praslin, who, like d'Argental, only lived behind the stage, until his cousin, the Duc de Richelieu, gave the importance of an embassy and ministry to his sad futility. Finally there was the vile Marquis de Thibouville, eminent amongst the infamous for the effrontery of his foulest of vices, and the refinement of a luxury nauseous in its effeminacy and vanity. The sole talent this shameful man had was to recite poems in a faint broken voice, and with an affectation that carried the stigma of his habits.

How did such people have influence or authority in the theatre? By paying court to Voltaire, who did not despise the homage of these vile toadies enough—and by making the little Duc d'Aumont believe that he could not do better in administering the Théâtre Français than by following the advice of Voltaire's friends. My young actress let herself be imposed on by the airs of importance and power that these gentlemen gave themselves, and I was struck by her respect for their abilities. I read my work to them. They listened in the gravest silence, and after the reading Mademoiselle Clairon, having assured them of my readiness to learn, begged them to give their opinion freely. They left the opening words to d'Argental. You know how he used to speak: hints and omissions, uncertain phrases, vague and mysterious—that is all I could extract, and, yawning like a carp, he finally announced that one must see how it would be accepted. After him M. de Praslin said that there were indeed many things in the play that needed reflection, and he advised me—to reflect about them. The Abbé de Chauvelin, fidgeting his short bandy-legs on his armchair, asserted that one was very much mistaken if one thought tragedy an easy thing to write; or thought that the plot, intrigue, customs, characters, the choice of words, the whole composition, was nothing less than child's play, and he—without judging it severely—recognised that mine was the work of a young man: but he left the matter to M. d'Argental. Thibouville spoke in his turn; caressing his chin with his hand to show off his turquoise, he said he thought he knew something about tragic verse: he had recited it so often that he ought to be able to criticise it: but how to enter into these details after just one simple reading? He could only refer me to the models of art: to name them was enough to make me understand; and when reading Racine and M. de Voltaire it was easy to see with what style they wrote.

As, whilst listening to them very attentively I had heard nothing clear or precise about my work, the idea came to me that they had chosen this trifling way of speaking out of caution. "I will leave you with these gentlemen," I said in a low voice to my actress; "they will explain themselves better when I am not there." And on seeing her in the evening—"Well," I asked, "did they speak more clearly in my absence than in my presence?" "Why, really, they spoke quite at their ease," she said laughingly. "And what did they say?" "They said that it was possible that this work might be a success; but that it was also possible that it would not be a success. And, on thinking it all over, one would answer for nothing and the other dare not be certain of anything." "But didn't they make any special observation? For instance, about the subject?" "Ah, the subject! That's the critical point! But how can one know? the public is so fickle!" "And the plot, how did it seem to them?" "As for the plot, Praslin did not know what to say, d'Argental did not know what to think, and the two others are of the opinion that one must judge at the theatre." "Didn't they say anything about the characters?" "They said that mine would be quite beautiful if . . . that Denys would be quite good, but . . ." "Well! if—but—and then?" "They looked at each other and didn't say anything more." "And about this fourth act—what do they think of it?" "Ah, as for the fourth act, its fate is decided: it will fail, or it will be praised to the skies." "Good, I accept the omen," I answered warmly, "and it depends on you, mademoiselle, to decide the prophecy in my favour." "How?" "This is how. When the younger Denys thwarts your rescue, if you notice that the public is moved against this virtuous endeavour, don't wait until they murmur; hastening the cue, make these lines ring out: '*Va, ne crains rien: Denys n'a rien appris encore*,' etc."

The actress understood, and you will soon see how she surpassed my hopes.

During the rehearsals of my play, an adventure happened to me which I have told my children, but which I wish to recall to them. Two years had passed since I had left Toulouse, and I had only paid for one year for my brother at the Irish Seminary. I owed them a whole year, and with much saving I had put aside the hundred crowns to pay it; but I wanted to be able to be sure that they reached their destination and without expense. Boubec, a notary of Toulouse and academician of the Floral Jousts, was then in Paris. I went to see him, and in the presence of a man wearing a decoration, who was unknown to me, I asked him if he had some safe way of sending my money. He said he had not any. "Eh, zounds!" cried the man with the red ribbon (I took him for a military man, but he was only a *chevalier du Christ*), "it is M. Marmontel, I believe, whom I am so happy to meet here? He does not recognise his friends from Toulouse." I confessed with confusion that I did not know at all to whom I had the honour of speaking. "I am the Chevalier d'Ambelot, who applauded you so heartily when you gained the prizes. Well, ungrateful as you are, I will render you the small service of taking your hundred crowns to the Irish Seminary. Give me your address. To-morrow morning you will get a letter of credit for that sum for me, payable at sight; and when the Father Superior informs you that the money has been paid him, you can give it to me here at your own convenience." Nothing could be kinder; so I thanked the gentleman very much for his eagerness to do me this service.

[illegible]

[illegible]

been reduced with misery, since he is a beggar; can [illegible] by me, since he is not there; as he has done [illegible] be infamous—quite the object of more [illegible] than I conclude that he has been falsely accused.' My conclusions were admitted, and I was unanimously [illegible]."

I promised Boulet not to forget the secret of such a beautiful speech for the defence, and set off, having thanked the Chevalier d'Arbaud again for the service he was going to do me. The following day a large [illegible] at [illegible], and [illegible] I [illegible] with [illegible] pleasure, brought me the bill of exchange, which I sent off at once.

Three days afterwards, passing through the [illegible] of the [illegible] during the morning, I heard myself called from the second floor. It was a Languedocian, called Favier, since very well known, who, from the window, invited me to come up to his rooms. I went up, and there, seated at a table covered with papers, I found him at his [illegible]. "My friend," said he, "a higher [illegible] compels me to keep to my room. These gentlemen are kindly keeping me company; we are breakfasting together; join us." This higher [illegible] was a [illegible] sentence [illegible] for debt. Favier was hard [illegible], but as he did [illegible] that the [illegible] and the [illegible], he gave an [illegible] as if he had been in affluence. The [illegible] of a [illegible], and the most [illegible] character: this man—otherwise he was [illegible], full of wit and knowledge, thinking well and [illegible], gifted with a talent for [illegible] which, had he been [illegible], would have made him able to fill the highest positions. I went to see him very [illegible], but his [illegible] and natural eloquence [illegible] me, and if I [illegible] the [illegible] was a dangerous [illegible]—as it was in [illegible].

My chevalier of the red ribbon, d'Ambelot, was one of the guests at breakfast. I renewed my thanks for his bill of exchange. "You are making fun of me," he said; "it is the very least service one could do for a fellow-countryman; for you have not said in vain that you are Toulousian, and we want you to be so." And seeing me ready to go, "I will go too," he said; "my coach is down below; where would you like me to drive you?" I refused, but he insisted, and made me enter his carriage. "Just allow me to go to the door of one of my friends in the Rue Colombier. I want to say just two words to him, and will be with you in a moment. You have just seen good old Favier," the cheat continued; "he's a most gallant and generous man: but no order or prudence. He was rich and now is ruined; but is just as prodigal. At this moment he is in trouble, and I am going to get him out of it if I can; for one ought to help one's friends when they need it."

Arrived at the house where he said he had business, he got out of the carriage, and came back the next minute out of temper and muttering beneath his breath. I saw he was bristling and asked the reason. "My friend," he said, "you are young and fresh to the world; take care whom you trust, for there are very few reliable people! This one here, for instance—a man to whom I would have confided my fortune, the Marquis de Montgaillard. . . ." "I know him. What has he done to rouse you so against him?" "Yesterday evening (but I confide this to you secretly; don't say anything about it to anyone; I don't want to ruin him). Yesterday evening, in a house where they were gambling, he was in a fever to play. I, who never gamble, wanted to dissuade him. He would not listen to me: he punted and lost; he doubled and redoubled his play, he lost all his money. He came to me and implored me to lend him what I had. I had only twelve louis, and I had given my word to bring them to good old Favier this morning, to pay an urgent debt. I told Montgaillard my necessity without telling him what it was for. He promised me on his word of honour to return them to me this morning. I gave them to him; he played with them and lost; and now, when I think I am going to get them, my man has gone out or has locked himself in; poor Favier, who is expecting me, will think I have broken my promise—I, who have never failed anyone in my life! Oh, I am indignant! And haven't I a right to be? You, monsieur, who know something about behaviour, tell me, haven't I reason to be?" "Monsieur le chevalier," I said to him, "it is three days since your bill of exchange was sent. Therefore I am in your debt now, and will repay it." "Oh, no," he said; "no, I would sooner borrow." "Most certainly," I said, "I will not allow that. This money is useless in my hands; and as it is necessary to you—it is yours. Please agree to it being sent to you forthwith." He made a good show of resisting; but on my side I insisted so strongly that he had to yield and take my hundred crowns.

Several days after a letter from the Superior of the seminary came as a blow from a club. In this letter he reproached me for having made a fool of him by sending him a scrap of paper. "The man on whom your adventurer had the impudence to draw for a bill of exchange owes him nothing," he wrote to me. "I have made a formal protestation against him and return it to you." You can realise my anger! It was an enormous crime in my eyes to have pilfered my poor little hundred crowns, but a much more horrible treachery was to have made me appear, if not a dishonest man, at least a trifling one. "Heavens!" I cried to myself, "how do they look on my brother now?" Beside myself with sorrow and anger, and sword at my side (for in vowing myself to the theatre I had changed my status), I ran to d'Ambelot's house and asked for him. "The wretch," answered the porter of the house, "he is in For l'Evêque. He has swindled us all out of the little money we had." I had not put him in prison, but a short time after I learnt that he was dead, and I was not at all distressed.

The day of my misadventure I went to pour out my trouble on Madame Harenc's bosom. "That is certainly robbing the altar," she said. And then: "You sup with me?" "Yes, madame." "I will leave you a moment." She came back within a few minutes. "I am thinking," she continued, "of your poor brother; perhaps this Irish priest will vent his ill-humour on him. To-morrow, my friend, you must send him a better bill of exchange." "Yes, madame, that is what I mean to do. Only tell me which banker to go to." "You will find one. Now let us talk of your rehearsals. Are they going well? Are you pleased with them?" I confided my concern over the vague oracles that had been pronounced at Mademoiselle Clairon's. She laughed heartily at that. "Do you know what will happen?" she said. "If your play succeeds, they will have prophesied it; if it fails, they will have said so too. But whether it fails or succeeds, remember that on that day you will sup with me and our friends, for we want to rejoice or be sad with you."

As she spoke with such kindness, her man of business came and spoke two words to her; and when he had gone out she said: "Here is a bill of exchange more certain of being paid on sight than your chevalier's." And when I spoke of repaying the money, "Denys," she said, "Denys is the debtor; he will acquit himself well."

From thenceforward my only uneasiness was the fate of my tragedy, and that was quite enough. It was such an important event for me that I may be pardoned, I hope, the moments of weakness I am going to confess.

At that time the author of a new play had, for himself and his friends, a little box, with a grating, on the third floor of the proscenium, of which I may say the bench was a veritable bank of thistles. I got there half an hour before the curtain went up, and until then I preserved some strength in my anguish. But at the noise the curtain made going up my blood froze in my veins. In vain they made me inhale spirits; I did not revive. It was only at the end of the first monologue, at the sound of the applause, that I came to life again. From then all went well, and better and better, until they reached that place in the fourth act which had so filled me with foreboding; but when the moment was coming near I was seized with such a shivering that, without exaggerating, my teeth chattered in my head. If the great disturbances that take place in the mind and senses were mortal, I would have died of the one I suffered when, at the inspired impetuosity the sublime Clairon put into the words "*Va, ne crains*," etc., the whole house rang with applause again and again. Never has keener dread changed to a more sudden or more acute joy; and, for the rest of the performance, this feeling agitated my heart and mind so violently that I could only breathe sobbingly.

At the climax, when, to the noise of applause and shouts from the pit, who called for me loudly, they came to tell me that I must go down and show myself on the stage, I could not possibly drag myself so far; my knees bent under me and I had to be supported.

"Mérope" was the first play for the author to be called for, and "Denys" was the second. What has since become so ordinary and unflattering was then an honour, and at the three first performances this honour was paid me; but this sort of intoxication was caused by circumstances which took away very much from the merit of my work. Crébillon was old, Voltaire was getting old; no other young man, between them and me, appeared to take their place. I seemed to drop from the clouds: this first attempt of a provincial, of a Limousin of twenty-four, seemed to promise marvellous things, and one knows that in their amusements the public likes at first to exaggerate its hopes—but woe to he who disappoints them. Reflection soon made me realise this, and the critics too hastened to warn me of it. However, for some days I was simply and calmly happy, and this joy was especially sweet during the supper Madame Harenc gave for me. M. de Presle took me there after the performance. His dear mother, who was waiting for me, took me in her arms, and, learning of my success, wept over me. So moving a welcome recalled my mother, and instantly a flood of bitterness mingled with my joy. "Oh, madame," I said to her, melting into tears, "if only that tender mother still lived, of whom you remind me! She would have kissed me too and have been so happy." Our friends arrived, thinking they had only to congratulate me. "Come," Madame de Harenc said to them, "console this poor boy. He weeps for his mother who would have been, so he says, so happy at this moment."

This return of sorrow was but fugitive, and soon the friendship shown me captured all my heart. If it is a comfort to tell one's trouble and sorrow, it is as keen and delicious pleasure to find hearts that will share one's happiness. I have always felt it easier to suffice for myself in grief than in joy. As soon as my soul is sad I want to be alone. It is to be happy with me that I need my friends.

When the fate of my play was decided I informed Voltaire, and at the same time I begged him to allow me to dedicate it to him. You can see in his collected letters with what satisfaction he heard of my success and how kindly he accepted my homage.

The same year that I had the sorrow of losing my mother Vauvenargues died. I had to relieve my yearning, and it was soothing to pour it out in my epistle to Voltaire. This epistle was, of all my works, the one I wrote with greatest rapidity. The verses flowed naturally; I wrote it in one evening, and have altered nothing since.

What Voltaire had predicted happened to me—in one day, in one moment almost, I was rich and famous. I used my wealth suitably. It was not the same with my fame: it became the cause of dissipation and sin. Until then my life had been retired and obscure. I lodged in the Rue des Mathurins with two studious men, Lavirote and the Abbé de Prades: the latter was occupied in translating the theology of Huet, and the other the physics of Mackhlorin, a pupil of Newton. With us lived two Gascon abbés, amiable do-nothings, of exhaustless gaiety, who ran round the town whilst we were absorbed in work, and came back in the evening to amuse us with the news they had gleaned or the stories they had invented. The houses I visited were those of Madame de Harenc and Madame Desfournils, her friend, where I was always welcome; Voltaire's, where I enjoyed the conversations of my illustrious master with delight; and that of Madame Denis, his niece, a woman lovable in her ugliness, whose natural and easy wit had taken on colour from her uncle's, as well as his taste and playfulness and exquisite courtesy—enough to make her society prized and sought after. All these connections helped to fill mind and heart with courage and emulation, and to pour into my work more warmth and knowledge.

But what a school the friendship of two of the most enlightened men of their century allowed me to attend every day for two years! No richer or more fertile talk has ever been heard than that of Voltaire and Vauvenargues: from Voltaire there was an inexhaustible abundance of interesting facts and flashes of insight; from Vauvenargues an eloquence full of urbanity, grace and wisdom. There never was such wit, gentleness and good faith in argument; and what charmed me still more was, on one side, the respect Vauvenargues had for Voltaire's genius, and, on the other, the tender reverence Voltaire had for Vauvenargues' virtue: both, without flattery or vain adulation or weak complacency, honoured each other with a liberty of thought that never disturbed the harmony and agreement of their feelings. But, at the time of which I speak, one of these illustrious friends was no more and the other was absent. I was too much left to myself.

After the success of "Denys," a strange, seductive, frivolous world took hold of me, and I was carried into the whirlpool of Paris. It was one way of attracting people, to show the author of the new play at one's house; and I, flattered by this eagerness, did not know how to defend myself. Invited every day to dinners and suppers where hosts and guests were equally new to me, I let myself be taken from one circle to another, often without having known how I came or went, so tired by the constant movement of the show, that in quiet moments I hadn't the strength to apply myself to anything. Nevertheless this variety and change of scene pleased me, I must confess; and my friends themselves, whilst recommending modesty and wisdom, thought that I ought to yield to this desire to know me. "If not friendship, it will be kindness and personal esteem you will gain by behaving well," they said. "You need to learn the habits and tastes, the tone and customs of the world: one can only study them well close at hand; and you are lucky to be introduced to it so early and so favourably."

My friends were right, had I known how to profit by this advantage in moderation, but an extreme pliability was the defect of my youth, and when it was a question of the attraction of pleasure, I never knew how to resist it.

During this time of giddiness and dissipation, one day a certain Monet came to see me; he has since become director of the Opéra Comique, but then I did not know him. "Monsieur," he said to me, "I am charged with a commission for you which will not displease you at all, I think. Have you not heard people speak of Mademoiselle Navarre?" I answered that the name was new to me. "She is," Monet continued, "the marvel of our age for wit and beauty. She comes from Brussels, where she adorned and delighted the court of the Maréchal de Saxe: she has seen 'Denys le Tyran'; she burns to know the author, and has sent me to invite you to dinner to-day." I promised willingly to go.

I have never been so dazzled as when I saw her—dressed *en Polonaise*, in the most elegant way, two long tresses flowing over her shoulders, and jonquil flowers on her head, setting off marvellously her fine brunette complexion, which was animated by the fire of two sparkling eyes. The welcome she gave me redoubled the peril of being near such great charm; and soon her speech confirmed the praise I had heard of her wit. Had I been able to foresee all the worry that day was to cause me, fear would have saved me from the danger I was running into. These are not just fairy-tales. You must learn from your father's example to dread the most seductive of the passions.

The guests my enchantress had gathered together that day were well-educated, charming people. The dinner was brilliant with gaiety and gallantry—but in a seemly way. Mademoiselle Navarre knew how to hold the reins of liberty with a light hand. She also knew how to divide her attentions: until the end of the dinner she distributed them so well that no one could complain: but insensibly she fixed them on me in so marked a manner, and walking in her garden, she let it be seen so clearly that she wished to be alone with me that the guests, one after the other, slipped noiselessly away. Whilst they were disappearing her dancing-master arrived. I watched her have her lesson. The dance she did then was known under the name of *l'Amiable Vainqueur*. She displayed in it all the charm of an elegant figure, with movements, steps and poses that were sometimes proud and then full of softness and voluptuousness. The lesson lasted hardly a quarter of an hour, and Lany was dismissed. Then, humming the air to which she had danced, Mademoiselle Navarre asked me did I know the words of the tune? I knew them: this is how they begin:

Aimable vainqueur
Fier Tyran d'un cœur,
Amour, dont l'empire
Et le martyre
Sont pleins de douceur! etc.

"Had I not known those words, I would have invented them," I said to her, "so appropriate is the moment to inspire them." A conversation begun thus does not quickly end. We spent the evening together, and during some quiet moments she asked me on what new work I was working. I told her the subject and explained the plot to her, but complained of the involuntary dissipation that I had to indulge in. She said: "Would you like to work in peace, at your ease and without distractions? Come and spend several months in Champagne, in the village of Avenay, where my father has a little house and some vineyards. My father is at Brussels at the head of a shop he cannot leave, and I have to attend to his affairs.

To-morrow I leave for Avenay; I shall be there alone until after the vintage. As soon as I have arranged everything to receive you, come and join me there. It would be most unfortunate if, with me and excellent Champagne, you could not write wonderful verse." What reason or wisdom or strength had I against the charm of such an invitation? I promised to leave at the first signal she gave me. She insisted I should give my most sacred word of honour not to tell anyone. She said she had the strongest reasons for hiding the understanding between us.

After her departure and until mine for Avenay, there was an interval of two months; and although we wrote to each other constantly and ardently, all that could interest mind and heart most keenly did not save me from boredom. The letters I received, inspired by a vivid and radiant imagination, excited mine with its sweet magic, making me desire only more fervently to see her, who, even in absence, gave me such ecstasy. I used the time to disentangle myself from most of the connections I had formed, telling some that my new play demanded solitude, and others that I had to make a journey to my home. Without explaining myself to either Madame de Harenc or Mademoiselle Clairon I warded off their anxiety; but, dreading Madame Denis' penetration and curiosity, I kept an absolute silence with her on the subject of my flight. I was wrong—I confess it. Her friendship for me had not waited for my success to declare itself. Unknown, I was received at her house as cordially as at her uncle's. She neglected nothing that might make her house pleasant to me. My friends were welcome there—they became her own. My old friend, the Abbé Raynal, remembers, as I do, the happy suppers we had with her. The Abbé Mignot, her brother, kind Cideville, my two Gascon abbés of the Rue de Mathurins, all brought a frank gaiety there; and I, young and still full of mirth, I may say that I was the hero of that table; I had the very spirit of nonsense. The lady and her guests were scarcely wiser or less merry than I, and when Voltaire could escape from the ties of his Marquise du Châtelet and his suppers with the great, he was only too happy to come and shout with laughter with us. Why didn't this easy, peaceful, even and unchanging happiness suffice? What more relaxation did I want at the end of a long day's work and study, and what was I going to seek in dangerous Avenay?

The so greatly desired, so impatiently expected letter arrived at last. I was lodging alone then, near the Louvre. Free from care about the cost of my food, I had separated from my house-companions, having just an old woman at six francs a month to wait on me, and a barber for the same money. It was to him I confided the care of finding me a postal courier who would take me in his cariole with my small valise as far as Reims. One was procured for me for a certain sum, and I departed. From Reims to Avenay I rode at full speed—although they say love has wings, it was not true for me; I was shattered when I arrived.

Here, my children, I will throw a veil over my deplorable madness. Though the time is far distant and I was very young, I do not wish to appear in a state of fever and delirium before your eyes.

But what you ought to know is, that the treacherous sweetness I was drowned in was intermingled with the most dreadful bitterness; that the most bewitching of women was at the same time the most capricious; that amidst its enchantment, her coquettishness invented every moment some new way of exercising its power; that her will changed in a minute, and always mine had to be subjected to hers; that she seemed to play with me and make me, turn and turn about, in almost the same breath—the happiest lover and the most unhappy slave. We were alone and she had the knack of disturbing our solitude by unforeseen accidents. The fickleness of her nerves, the exceptional vivacity of her mind, gave her a splenetic humour which alone would have caused me torment. When she was in the most radiant health and playfulness, fits of uncontrollable laughter would seize her—to the laughter would succeed a tension in all her limbs, trembling and convulsive movements ending in tears. These symptoms were more painful for me than for her, but they made her still dearer and more interesting to me: I was happy if her whims did not occupy the interval between the moods! Alone amidst the vineyards of Champagne, how could she manage to torment and distress a young man? That was her study, in that lay her genius. Each day she invented some fresh thing to test my heart. It was as if she composed a novel in action, and introduced all the scenes.

The nuns of the village refused her the entry to their garden, and this was an odious and unbearable privation; all other walks were insipid. I must scale the walls of the forbidden garden with her. The guard came with his gun, and begged us to go out; she would take no notice. He aimed at me; she watched my face. I went up to him and haughtily slipped a crown into his hand, but without her seeing it, for she would have taken that as a sign of weakness. Finally she took his side herself, and we withdrew without disturbance, in good order and walking slowly.

Another time she came, with an air of disquietude, holding a letter in her hand, real or supposed, from an unsuccessful lover, jealous and furious at my happiness, who threatened to come and avenge himself on me for being slighted. Whilst giving me the letter, she watched me to see if I read it coolly, for she respected nothing so much as courage; had I seemed worried I would have been lowered in her opinion.

No sooner did I come out of one trial than she invented others, and didn't leave me time to breathe; but of all the states she made me pass through, the most critical was this. Her father, having heard that a young man was staying with her, reproached her. She exaggerated his anger to me. To listen to her one would have thought she was lost; her father was going to come and throw us out: there was only one way, she said, to appease him, and that depended on me; but she would rather die than point it out to me: my love for her must show me. I understood her very well; but love, which, when near her, made me forget the world, did not make me forget myself. I adored her as a mistress, but did not want her as a wife. I wrote to M. Navarre praising his daughter, and testifying the purest respect for her, the most innocent friendship. I went no further. The good man answered that if I had lawful designs on her (as she had apparently made him understand) there was no sacrifice he would not make for our happiness. I answered, stressing the esteem, friendship and praise of his daughter; I evaded the rest. I have reason to think she was displeased by this, and whether to revenge herself for the refusal of her hand, or to find out what my love would be, in a jealous rage she chose to pierce me to the heart with the most lacerating, harrowing dart. During one of those moments when I believed her to be entirely occupied with me only—as I with her—the name of my rival, of that jealous rival with whom she had threatened me, was the one she uttered. I heard from her lips: " Oh, my dear Betisy." Imagine, if it is possible, what a rage seized me. I rushed out in a frantic state, and calling loudly for the servants, I ordered post-horses; but I had scarcely shut myself up in my room to prepare for my departure, when she rushed to me all dishevelled, and knocking on my door with fearful violence, and uttering piercing cries, she compelled me to open it. Certainly, if she wanted to see me an unhappy wretch quite beside myself, she ought to have felt triumphant; but terrified at the state she had put me into, I in my turn saw her, tormented and despairing, throw herself at my feet and ask pardon for a sin of which her tongue only was guilty, and to which neither her thought nor mind had consented. That this scene should have been acting is unbelievable, and at that time I was myself far from thinking so; but the more I have since reflected on the inconceivable strangeness of this fantastic character, the more I think it possible that she wanted to see me in a fresh situation, and that, touched by the violence of my sorrow, she wished to lessen it. At any rate it is true that I never saw her so beautiful or so touching as she was in that awful moment. So, after having been inexorable for a long enough time, I finally allowed myself to be persuaded to relent; but a few days later, her father having recalled her to Brussels, we had to part. Our farewells were vows to love each other for ever; and with the hope of seeing her again soon, I came back to Paris.

The reason of my flight was no longer a mystery: a poet song-writer, the Abbé de l'Attaignant, Canon of Reims, where he then was, having learnt of our adventure, had made it the subject of an ode to Mademoiselle Navarre, and this ode ran round the town. So I found I had acquired the reputation of a lady-killer, which I well could have done without, for it made people jealous of me, and that means enemies.

The day after my arrival, the two Gascon abbés of the Rue des Mathurins came to see me, and I got a serious lecture of the most comical kind. "Where have you come from ?" said the Abbé Forest. "This is pretty behaviour! You slink away like a thief, without saying a word of good-bye to your best friends! You go away to Champagne! We look for you, we look in vain. Where is he ? Nobody knows: and this interesting woman, this gentle woman you have abandoned, whom you've left in fears and tears, what barbarity ! Fie upon you, libertine that you are, you don't deserve the love she bears you." "Who is," I asked him, "this Ariane in tears ? And of whom are you speaking ?" "Of whom ?" took up the Abbé Debon; "of the desolate lover who thought you were drowned, and had you searched for even to the nets of Saint Cloud; and who since has learned that you betrayed her—in fine, of Madame Denis." "Gentlemen," I said to them firmly and seriously, "Madame Denis is my friend and nothing more. She has no right to complain of my conduct. I kept it secret from her, as I did from you, because I had to." "Yes, secret," Forest went on, "from Mademoiselle Navarre, for one!" I interrupted. "Gently, monsieur," I said to him. "You don't mean to offend me, I am sure, but you will if you go any further. I have never allowed myself to rebuke you; I beg you not to do so to me." "Why, zounds," answered Forest, "it's all very well for you to speak! You go away gaily to Champagne to drink the best wine in the world with a charming girl; and we here have to pay the damage. We were accused of being in your confidence, of having approved—of being your accomplices. Madame Denis herself looks on us blackly and receives us coldly; in short, since you must know," he added in a pathetic voice, "there are no more suppers at her house; the poor woman is in mourning." "Ah, I understand: that's the great crime of my absence. Really, I am not surprised that you scolded me so roundly! No more suppers! Come, we must reinstate them. You are invited for to-morrow." An air of jubilation spread over their faces. "So you think she will forgive you?" said one. "Yes," said the other, "she is a kind woman, and peace will soon be made." "Friendship's peace is always easy to make," I said to them; "it is not the same with love; and the proof that there is nothing in the quarrel is that there will be no trace of it to-morrow. Good-bye. I am going to see Madame Denis."

She received me a little crossly and complained of the uneasiness my escapade had caused her—as it had to all my friends. I endured her reproaches, and confessed that at my age one was exempt from neither weakness nor folly. As to the secrecy of my journey, it was a command; I could not have betrayed it. "Do not seem to be offended by it, madame; they will think that you are jealous—and that is a rumour to be denied rather than authorised." "Deny it?" she said. "Are they spreading that around?" "No, not yet," I said, "but your scattered guests might easily send it round the town. I have just seen two this morning who made the liveliest scene, and who think you are in despair, because of your interrupted suppers." I recounted the scene to her; she laughed at it with me, and agreed that it would be right to invite them as soon as possible, to get the idea of an Ariane in tears out of their minds! "Now that is what I call friendship," I said; "easy, indulgent and peace-loving; nothing changes it and with it one lives happily, merrily, in harmony, all one's life; instead of with love. . . ." "With love!" she cried. "Heaven preserve me from it. It is only good for tragedy; and the comic is what suits me better. You, monsieur, who ought to know how to express the torments, furies and ecstasies of tragic love—you need someone to give you lessons; and I have heard that you went to quite the right person for that. I congratulate you."

Alas! yes, I already knew, through my fatal experience, how the passion of love, even when it thinks itself happy, is yet in a violent and painful state; but until then I had only known the lightest pains: a much longer and crueller agony was reserved for me!

The first letter I got from Mademoiselle Navarre was passionate and tender. The second was still tender, but was less passionate. The third tarried, and it was but the faint spark of a dying fire. I complained, and my lament was answered by frivolous excuses: fêtes and performances, receiving society, were the alleged reasons for negligence and coldness. I ought to have known women: amusement and dissipation have such an attraction for them that they must be allowed, at least in absence, to throw themselves into them. Then began the real agony of love for me. No answer to three burning and heartrending letters. At first I found this silence so incomprehensible that after the postmen had passed, saying the overwhelming words, "There is nothing for you," I would go to the post myself, to see if any letter to my address were still there; and after having been, I would go again. In this continual expectation, constantly baffled, I pined and burned away.

I have forgotten to say that on my arrival in Paris, whilst passing the colonnade of Saint German l'Auxervois, an old picture of Cleopatra struck me with its likeness to Mademoiselle Navarre, and at once I bought it and took it home with me. It was my one consolation. I shut myself up alone with this picture, and sighing before it, begged it, for pity's sake, one word in a letter to bring life back to me. Madman! how could this image hear me? She whom it resembled did not deign to hear me. This excessive harshness and contempt was not natural to her. I thought she was ill, or shut up by her father and watched like a criminal. Everything seemed possible and probable except the horrible truth.

I had not been able to hide my sorrow well enough from Mademoiselle Clairon, and she made me confess the cause of it; and all she could think of doing to soothe and lessen my pain she did. One evening when we were in the green-room of the Comédie she heard the Marquis de Braucas-Céreſt say to someone that he had come from Brussels. "Monsieur le Marquis," she said to him, "may I ask if you have seen Mademoiselle Navarre?" "Yes," he answered, "I saw her there; she is more beautiful and radiant than ever, leading the Chevalier de Mirabeau captive to her chariot; she is in love with him and he idolises her." I was present; I heard his answer. My heart was lacerated by this blow, and I went home to sink down like a slaughtered victim. What madness, my children, can be like that of a young man who believes in the fidelity of a woman famous for her frailty, and whose love of pleasure has made her forget chaſtity?

But she, however, was less libertine than romantic, and seemed to have changed her habits in her love for the Chevalier de Mirabeau; but the romance did not laſt long, and ended sadly.

The fever that seized me the very evening I learned my misery was ſtill on me, when one morning a handsome young man, a ſtranger, came to see me and declined to give his name. It was the Chevalier de Mirabeau. "Monsieur," he said, "I come to you on two grounds: firſt, as the intimate friend of your friend, the late Marquis de Vauvenargues, my former comrade in the King's Regiment. I would be proud to deserve the place he had in your heart, and I want to gain it. The other is not so favourable—it is as your successor with Mademoiselle Navarre. I can teſtify that she has the tendereſt regard for you. I have often been jealous of the way she speaks of you; and when I was leaving Brussels she ordered me most expressly to come to you and ask for your friendship."

"Monsieur le Chevalier," I answered, "you see that I am ill; and it is you who have made me so, and I confess I do not feel disposed to make friends so suddenly with the too charming man who has done me so much harm. But the noble, loyal and frank way you speak of yourself fills me with a deep regard for you; and since I must be sacrificed, it is at least a consolation that it should be for a man like you. Please sit down. We will speak of our friend M. de Vauvenargues; we will also speak of Mademoiselle Navarre; and of both I can tell you only what is good." After this conversation, which was long and interesting, he said: "Monsieur, I don't think you will be hurt to learn that mademoiselle has given me your letters. Here they are: they honour your mind no less than your heart. In giving them back to you for her, I was asked to receive hers." "Monsieur," I asked, "had she the kindness to write me two words authorising me to give them to you?" "No," he said, "she thought, as I did, that you would take my word as sufficient." "Forgive me," I answered; "in what concerns me, I can give my confidence—then I dispose only of what is my own, but another's secret I cannot treat in that way. However"—taking Mademoiselle Navarre's packet of letters from my writing-table—"you recognise her writing, and you see that I am taking nothing away from them—you will be a witness that her letters have been burnt." And immediately I put them in the fire with my own; and whilst they were burning together: "I have done my duty and my sacrifice is complete." He approved my delicacy and went away satisfied. The fever did not leave me; I was melancholy; I wished to see no one. I felt the need of breathing fresher air than that in the Louvre quarter; I wanted solitary walks for my convalescence, and went to lodge in the Luxembourg quarter.

It was there that, still ill in bed, whilst the Savoyard who attended me was absent, I heard someone enter my room. " Who is there ?" They did not answer, but divided the curtains of my alcove, and in the darkness I felt myself kissed by a woman whose face, pressed against mine, bedewed it with tears. " Who are you ?" I asked again. And, without answering, she renewed her kisses and sighs and tears. At last she arose and I saw Mademoiselle Navarre in morning disarray, lovelier than ever in her sorrow and tears. " It is you, mademoiselle ?" I cried. " Alas! who brings you here ? Do you want to kill me ?" And saying these words, I saw the Chevalier de Mirabeau behind her, motionless and wordless. I thought I was delirious; but she, turning to him tragically, said: " See, monsieur, see who it is I sacrifice for you: the most passionate, most faithful, and tenderest lover and the best friend that I had in the world; see to what a state my love for you has brought him, and how much to blame you will be if you are ever unworthy of such a sacrifice." The Chevalier was petrified with astonishment and wonder. " Are you able to get up ?" she asked me. " Yes." " Good, then get up, and give us some breakfast; for we want you to advise us; we have things of the greatest importance to tell you."

I rose, and my Savoyard having arrived, I had some coffee and milk brought. As soon as we were alone she said: " My friend, Monsieur le Chevalier and I are going to consecrate our love at the altar; we are going to be married, not in France, where there are too many obstacles to overcome, but in Holland, where we shall be free. The Maréchal de Saxe is wild with jealousy. Here is a letter he has written to me. He treats Monsieur le Chevalier slightingly, but he will have to account for that !" I pointed out to her that a jealous rival is not obliged to be just towards his rival, and that it would be hardly prudent or possible to attack the Maréchal de Saxe. "What do you mean by attack?" she answered; "in a duel, sword in hand? Not that at all. I have not made myself clear. Monsieur de Chevalier after his marriage will go and offer his services to some foreign power; he is well known and can choose. With his name, his gifts and his face he will soon make his way; he will be always at the head of his army, and on the field of battle he will measure himself with the Maréchal." "Splendid, mademoiselle!" I cried; "that I approve, and I recognise both of you in such a generous plan." They were, in fact, as ardent and pleased with their resolve as if it could be carried out the following day. Eventually, I heard that after they had been married in Holland they went to Avignon; that the Chevalier's brother, the so-called friend of man and enemy of his brother, had used his influence to have him pursued as far as the Papal States; that when the zbirri, by order of the vice-legate, came to arrest him, his wife being in child-bed and seeing them come into her room, the terror that seized her caused such a shock that it killed her. I wept for her; and, ever since, this friend of man, whom I knew to be a moral hypocrite, a court intriguer, and spiteful, arrogant and wicked, has been my pet aversion.

I cannot explain the almost sudden change that took place in me when I heard that the Chevalier de Mirabeau loved Mademoiselle Navarre enough to make her his wife. Cured of my love, and, above all, of my jealousy, I thought it right for her to have preferred him; and far from being humiliated by it I was pleased with myself for having given her up to him. Through that I realised how much feelings of self-love and wounded vanity enter into the vexations and anguish of love. But at the bottom of my heart there was a malaise, an uneasiness, and a weariness that held me in thrall. The picture of Cleopatra, which was still before my eyes, had lost its resemblance; it touched me no longer, it irked me, and I got rid of it. What trebled my sadness was the loss of my talent. Amidst the delights and torments of Avenay, I had had hours of fervour to give to work: Mademoiselle Navarre herself enticed me to it. On stormy days, as she was frightened of thunder, we had to dine or sup in the wine-cellars (which belonged to the Maréchal); and in the midst of fifty thousand bottles of champagne it was difficuly not to become inflamed. Certainly on those days my verses were heady; but reflection dissipated these fumes. As I advanced I read her my new scenes. To judge them, she would go and sit on what she called her throne: it was on the summit of the vineyards, a little mound of turf surrounded by briers; you must look in her letters for the description of this throne that awaited us—as she said, Armida's could not have been more enchanting. There, at her feet, I read my poems; and when she approved I thought them the finest in the world; but when the charm was broken and I was alone in the world, instead of flowers strewing the path of art, there were only thorns. The spirit of inspiration left me; mind and soul fell languidly, like the sails of a ship, which, all of a sudden, lacks wind to swell them. Mademoiselle Clairon, seeing the languor into which I had fallen, was eager to bring some remedy. "My friend," she said, "your heart needs to love; melancholy is just an emptiness: you must fill it, use it. Is there no woman in the world who could be lovable in your eyes?" "I only know one," I said to her, "who could console me if she wanted to; but is she generous enough to wish to?" "That is what we must find out," she answered with a smile. "Do I know her? I will help you if I can." "Yes, you know her and can do a lot with her." "Well, tell me who she is and I will speak for you. I will tell her that you love heartily and faithfully; that you are capable of fidelity and constancy, and that she is sure of being happy in loving you." "Then you believe all that of me?" "Yes, I am very sure of it." "Then be so kind as to say it to yourself." "To me, my friend?" "To you." "Oh, if it depends on me, you will be consoled and I shall be very proud."

So this new attachment was formed; as can be easily foreseen, it did not last long, but had the advantage of rousing me to work. Never have love and love of glory been more united than they were in my heart.

"Denys" was put on once more at the theatre; it had the same success as a revival as when it was new. The part of Arétie showed signs of the additional interest taken in it by she who desired my fame more than anything else. She was sublime; more fascinating than ever. With what delight the actress and author supped together!

My enthusiasm for Mademoiselle Clairon's talent was so keen, so exalted that it was impossible to disentangle what was not love in my passion for her; but independently of her charms as an actress she was a very desirable lover in her radiant, youthful vivacity, her playfulness, and the attractiveness of a lovable nature without any capriciousness, and with the sole desire and the most delicate care to make her lover happy. As long as she loved, no one could love more tenderly or more passionately, nor with more sincerity. Sure of her and of myself, my head free and my heart at peace, I gave part of the day to work and the other was reserved for her. Charming when I left her, the same, and yet more charming when I returned. What a pity that so seductive a character was so light, and that with so much sincerity, and even fidelity in her loves, she had no constancy.

She had a friend with whom we had supper sometimes. One day she said: "Don't come to-night, you won't be happy; the Bailli de Fleury is supping there and will bring me back." "I know him," I answered naïvely. "He will bring me back too, quite willingly." "No," she said; "he will only have a vis-à-vis."[1] This word was like a flash of light. And as she saw I was thunderstruck, she continued: "Well, my friend, it is my whim—you must let me have it." "Is that really true? Are you speaking seriously?" I asked. "Yes, I am mad sometimes, but I would never be false." "I am grateful to you for that," I said, "and I yield my place to Monsieur le Bailli." For this time I felt brave and reasonable; and what happened the next day showed me how much more like my own are decent feelings than a frivolous and transient attraction.

A lawyer from my home, Rigal, came to see me and said: "Mademoiselle B—— promised you never to marry without the consent of your mother. Your mother is no more. Mademoiselle B—— is none the less faithful to her word. A suitable match is offered to her; she will not accept any without your consent." At these words I felt reborn in me, not the love I had for her, but a feeling so sweet and keen and tender that I could not have resisted it had my fortune and position been sound. "Alas!" I said to Rigal, "why am I not in a position to suggest myself instead of the man they propose for my dear B——! But unhappily the fate I could offer her is too vague and uncertain. My future runs risks that hers must not depend on. She deserves a sure happiness; and I can only envy him who can assure her of that."

Several days afterwards, I got a note from Mademoiselle Clairon saying: "I need your friendship just now. I know you too well not to count on it. Come and see me; I shall expect you." I went to her house. There were people there. "I have something to say to you," she cried when she saw me. I followed her into her private room. "You tell me, mademoiselle, that my friendship can be of use to you. I have come to know how and to assure you of my zeal." "It is neither your zeal nor just your friendship I implore," she said. "It is your love; you must give it back to me."

---

[1] A coach where two people sat opposite each other.

Then, with an ingenuity that for anyone else but me would have been humorous, she told me how little that doll, le Bailli de Fleury, deserved my jealousy. After this humble confession, she used, but vainly, all the charm that a bewitching lovable rogue could to win back a heart in which reflection had extinguished love.

"You did not deceive me," I said to her, "and just as sincerely I think it my duty not to deceive you. We are made to be friends, and will be all our life, if you wish; but we shall never be lovers again." I curtail a dialogue that on my side had one unchanging conclusion. But on leaving her sad and discomfited I felt I had avenged myself a little too much.

"Aristomène" was finished; I read it to the actors. Mademoiselle Clairon took part in this reading with cold dignity. It was known that we were on bad terms: I was all the more praised because of it. The actors were puzzled as to whether I would give her the part of Aristomène's wife. She was uneasy, especially as she heard that the rôles were distributed. She received hers and a quarter of an hour afterwards she arrived at my house with one of her friends. "Here, monsieur," she said (entering in the same manner that she came on the stage, and throwing the paper book that had been given to her on my table), "I do not want the part without the author; the one belongs to me as much as the other." "My dear friend," I said, kissing her, "on this point I am with you: I ask nothing better. Any other emotion would make us unhappy." "He is right," she said to her companion; "my bad temper would be his torment and mine. Come then, my friend, come and dine with your good friend." From that moment the most perfect intimacy was established between us: it endured for thirty years, and although separated from each other by my new life, nothing has altered the strength of our mutual feelings.

Concerning this sure and frank friendship that reigned between us, I remember a fact that must not be lost. Mademoiselle Clairon was neither rich nor saving, she often needed money. One day she said to me: "I want twelve louis; have you got it?" "No, I have not." "Try to get it for me and bring it to me in my dressing-room at the Comédie." At once I started hunting for it. I knew many rich people, but did not want to ask any of them. I went to my Gascon abbés, and several others of that sort, and found them hard up. I arrived at Mademoiselle Clairon's dressing-room very sad. She was alone with the Duc de Duras. "You are very late," she said. "I have been on the quest of some money that is owed to me, but it was all no use." Having said that and seen that it was understood, I went to take my place in the amphitheatre, when I heard myself called by name from the end of the corridor. I turned and saw the Duc de Duras coming towards me, and he said: "I have just heard you say that you need money; how much do you need?" With these words he took out his purse. I thanked him, saying that the need was not pressing. "That is not the answer," he insisted; "what is the sum of money you want?" "Twelve louis," I said at last. "Here they are, but on the condition that whenever you want any, you come to me." And when I gave them back to him and pressed him to take them: "You wish it absolutely? Then I will take them; but remember that this purse where I put them is yours." I never made use of this credit; but since then there is no kindness he has not shown me. We were together in the French Academy, and at all times I had reason to be pleased with him. His joy was to seize opportunities to serve me. When I dined at his house he always gave me his beſt champagne; and during his fits of gout he ſtill showed pleasure at seeing me. They said he was fickle; certainly he never was with me. Let us return to "Ariſtomène."

Voltaire was then in Paris. He wished to hear my play before it was completed, and I had read four acts to him with which he was satisfied. But the act that remained for me to write caused him uneasiness, and not without reason. In the four acts he had heard the plot seemed complete and carried through from beginning to end. "What?" he said after the reading, "do you intend to break away from ordinary rules—juſt after your second tragedy? When I wrote the 'Death of Cæsar' in three acts, it was for a college, and as an excuse I had the necessity of introducing only men; but you, in a large theatre, in a subject where nothing would have bothered you, to give a mutilated play, in four acts, a ſtrange form of which you have no example at all—at your age it is an unfortunate licence which I don't know that I can allow." "But," I said to him, "it is not my plan to take this licence. My play is in five acts in my head, and I hope to accomplish them." "And how?" he asked me. "I have juſt heard the laſt act, and all the acts follow on to each other; you cannot think of taking the plot further?" "No," I replied, "the plot begins and ends as you have seen; the reſt is my secret. What I meditate is perhaps crazy, but however dangerous it is, I muſt do it; and if you take my courage away from me, all my work will be lost." "Well, my child," he said, "do it, dare it, risk it; it is always a good sign. In this trade, as in war, temerity can be very lucky; and often great beauty is born in the midst of the most desperate difficulties."

The day of the first performance he waited to sit behind me in my box and was almost as excited and as trembling as I. "Now," he said, "before they raise the curtain, tell me from what you have drawn the act that was missing." I reminded him that at the end of the second act, it is said that the wife and son of Aristomène are to be judged, and at the beginning of the third, one learns that they have been condemned. "Well," I told him, "this trial which was supposed to have taken place in between the acts, I have put on the stage." "What! the Tournelle[1] on the stage!" he cried. "You make me tremble!" "Yes," I said, "it is a danger, but it was inevitable; Clairon will save me."

"Aristomène" had at least as much success as "Denys." At every round of applause Voltaire pressed me in his arms; but what astonished him and made him thrill with joy was the effect of the third act. When he saw Léonide, loaded with chains like a criminal, appear amidst her judges, dominate them with her great personality, and, gaining power over the scene and the souls of the spectators, turn her defence into an accusation, and distinguishing amongst the senators Aristomène's virtuous friends and his treacherous enemies, attack and overwhelm the latter with a conviction of their perfidy; at the sound of the applause she roused, "Splendid, Clairon!" cried Voltaire, "macte animo, generose fuer."

Certainly no one knows better than I how little worthy I was, from the point of view of talent, to make him envious; but the success was great enough to have made him jealous, had he had that weakness. No, Voltaire had too great a realisation of his superiority to fear common talent. Perhaps a new Corneille or a new Racine would have vexed him, but it was not as easy as they thought to make the author of "Zaïre," "Alzire," "Mérope" and "Mahomet" uneasy.

---

[1] A chamber of the ancient Parliament of Paris.

At this first performance of "Aristomène" I was once more obliged to show myself on the stage; but at the following performances my friends gave me the courage to avoid the cheers of the public.

An accident interrupted my success and disturbed my joy. Rosselli, the actor of whom I have already spoken, played the part of Arcine, the friend of Aristomène, and played it with as much warmth as intelligence. He was neither handsome nor well-made; he had even a very noticeable burr in his pronunciation; but he made one forget his defects by the modesty of his action, and by an expression full of humour and energy. I attribute to him the success of the dénouement of my tragedy; this is in fact how he had made it decisive. When, in the last scene, speaking of the decree which was the crowning point of the senate's atrocities, he said, "*Theonis le défend, et s'en nomme l'auteur*," he noticed that the public rose up in indignation; at once, advancing to the edge of the stage with the swiftest movement, he cried to the pit, as if to appease them: "*Je m'élance, et lui plonge un poignard dans le cœur.*" In the attitude and gesture that accompanied these words, one seemed to see Theonis struck down, and a rapturous joy swept round the theatre.

Now, after the sixth performance of my play, and in the very fervour of its success, they came to tell me that Rosselli was attacked with inflammation of the lungs and they proposed to replace him with an actor incapable of acting the part. It would be very bad for me to have this thronging of people interrupted, but it would be a worse evil to have my work spoilt. I asked that the performance might be suspended until Rosselli was well again, and only during the following winter was "Aristomène" once more put on at the theatre.

At the first performance of this revival the emotion of the public was so keen that again they called for the author. I refused to appear on the stage, but I was at the back of a box. Someone saw me from the pit and cried: "There he is!" The box faced the amphitheatre; the whole pit turned round: I had to advance, and respond with a humble bow to this new favour.

The man who, from the back of his box, had taken me in his arms to show me to the public, will occupy a considerable space in these memoirs through the harm he did me by trying to do me good, and through the attractive and injurious delights his circle had for me. It was M. de la Poplinière. Right from the success of "Denys le Tyran" he had drawn me to his house. But at the period of which I am speaking the courage he had in offering me his country house as a retreat, at the risk of displeasing the all-powerful man I had offended, attached me very strongly to so generous a host. The peril from which he tore me was one caused by a youthful adventure I had embarked on very imprudently, but one which will teach my children to be wiser than I.

FOURTH BOOK

WHILE I was still lodging in the Luxembourg quarter, a former actress of the Opéra Comique, la Darimat, a friend of Mademoiselle Clairon, and wife of Durancy, a comic actor in a provincial troup, being brought to bed in Paris, had persuaded my actress to be godmother to her child, and I had been chosen to be godfather. Because of this baptism, it happened that my fellow-godmother, Durancy, who at Mademoiselle Clairon's had sometimes heard me speak on the art of declamation, said to me one day: " My godfather, how would you like me to give you a young and pretty actress to teach? She hopes to make her début in tragedy, and she is worth the trouble of the lessons. It is Mademoiselle Verriáre, one of Maréchal de Saxe's protégés. She is your neighbour; she is well-behaved; she lives very respectably with her mother and sister. The Maréchal, as you know, has gone to see the King of Prussia, and on his return we want to give him the pleasure of finding his pupil at the theatre, acting Zaïre and Iphigenia better than Mademoiselle Gausin. If you will undertake to teach her, I will install you to-morrow; we will dine together at her house." My adventure with Mademoiselle Navarre had not estranged me from Maréchal de Saxe; he had even shown me kindness; and before " Aristomène " was put on at the theatre he had sent word to ask me to go and read it to him. This reading in private interested him: the part of Aristomène touched him. He thought Léonide theatrical. " But, zounds!" he said, " that's a very quarrelsome woman! I wouldn't have her for anything!" That was his only criticism. However, he was pleased, and evinced it with the noble and gentlemanly freedom in which one felt his heroic quality.

So I was enchanted to have a chance of doing something that would please him, and very innocently but very imprudently agreed to the proposal.

The Maréchal's protégé was one of his mistresses; she had given herself to him at the age of seventeen. He had a child by her, recognised and married since under the name of Aurore de Saxe. After the birth of this child he had made her an income of a hundred louis; he gave her further five hundred louis a year for her expenditure. He loved her with pure friendship, but she was no longer admitted to his pleasures. The gentleness, artlessness and timidity of her character had no longer any stimulation for him. It was known that with much nobility and ardour of soul, Maréchal de Saxe was ribald in his habits. By taste as much as by method he wanted merriment in his armies, saying that the French never went so well as when they were led gaily, and that what they feared more than war was boredom. He had always an Opéra Comique in his camps. And he gave his battle orders at the performance, and those days, between the two pieces, the principal actress announced, thus: "Messieurs, to-morrow no performance at the theatre, because of the battle which M. le Maréchal is giving; the day after to-morrow, 'The Cock of the Village,' 'The Merry Lovers,' etc."

Two actresses of this theatre, Chantilly and Beaumenard, were his two favourite mistresses; and their rivalries, their jealousies, their caprices gave him, he said, "more torment than the Queen of Hungary's hussars." I read those words in one of his letters. It was for them that mademoiselle had been neglected. He found in her too much arrogance, and not enough desire to please or abandonment. Mademoiselle

Verrière, with infinitely less cunning, had not even the wish to wrangle over him with her rivals; she seemed to rely on her beauty to please, without contributing anything to it but the evenness of an amiable character, and through the ease with which she let herself be loved.

The first scenes we rehearsed together were those of Zaïre with Orosmane. Her face, her voice, the tenderness of her glance, her candid and modest air harmonised perfectly with the part; and I put only too much vehemence and ardour into mine. After our second lesson, the words, "Zaïre, you are weeping," were a danger to my discretion.

The docility of my scholar made me assiduous; this assiduity was maliciously explained. The Maréchal, who was then in Prussia, informed of our friendship, was seized with an anger unworthy so great a man. The fifty louis a month mademoiselle received were cut off, and he announced that as long as he lived he would not see the mother or her child again. He kept his word; and it was only after his death, and a little through my mediation, that Aurore was recognised and educated in a convent as the daughter of this hero.

The abandonment that overwhelmed my Zaïre crushed both of us with woe. Forty louis remained from the production of my new tragedy; I begged her to accept them. However, Mademoiselle Clairon and all our friends advised us to leave off seeing each other, at least for a time. It cost us many tears, but we followed this advice.

The Maréchal came back. I heard on all sides that he was furious with me. I have since been told by Maréchal de Loewendahl, and by two more of his friends, Sourdis and Flavacourt, that they had great trouble in restraining the transports of his anger. He went about saying in the world, at court, and to the

King himself, that this little insolent poet took away all his mistresses. (I had, however, only taken those he abandoned.) He showed a note of mine that a treacherous lackey had stolen from this one. Fortunately in this note, in reference to the tragedy of "Cléopatra," at which I was working, it was said that Antony was "a hero in love as in war." "And this Antony," said the Maréchal, "you understand perfectly who it is!" This allusion, which I had not thought of, flattered him and calmed him a little. Nevertheless I was in all the more cruel anxiety, because I was resolved, at the peril of my life, to revenge myself on him if he had me insulted. In this situation, one of the most painful I have found myself in, M. de la Poplinière proposed that I should retire to his house in the country; and, on the other hand, the Prince of Tourenne relieved my distress at leaving my Zaïre in wretchedness. This Prince, finding me one evening in the foyer of the Comédie Française, came to me and said: "You are the cause of Maréchal de Saxe leaving mademoiselle: will you give me your word not to see her again? Her misery will be relieved." This explained the mystery of the rendezvous she had given me in the Bois de Boulogne, and the tears that flowed when she bade me good-bye. "Yes, my Prince, I will give the promise you ask. May mademoiselle be happy with you; I consent not to see her again." He took it, and I was faithful to my promise.

Withdrawn, almost solitary, in this country house, very different then to what it had been, and to what it since has been, I had time to abandon myself to contemplation of myself. I turned my eyes to the abyss on the edge of which I had just been. The hero of Fontenoy, the idol of the army and the whole of France, the man before whom the highest nobility of the kingdom were in awe, and whom the King himself received with all the distinction that could please a great man—it was against him I had erred, without even as excuse the aberration of a mad love. The weak and imprudent girl had not concealed from me that she was indebted to him for his benefits, and as the father of her child. I knew so well and was so persuaded of the frightful risk we both ran that whenever I crept into her house at unseasonable hours I was always trembling. I found her and left her more shaken than I. There is no pleasure that would not have been too dearly paid for, by our fears of being surprised and denounced. And if the Maréchal, informed of my temerity and disdaining to take my life, had just had me insulted by one of his valets, I could only combat this fear with a resolution I cannot think of without shuddering. Oh, children, what dangers I risked in my too ardent youthfulness for a chance, passing connection, without any reason save the pleasure and the opportunity! I thought it my duty to point out this rock in order to save you from shipwreck.

Shortly after the Maréchal died. He ended by being magnanimous towards me, like the lion in the fable to the young mouse. At the first performance of "Cléopatra," finding himself in the corridor face to face with me, when coming out of his box (an encounter that made me go pale), he was kind enough to say these words of approbation: "Very good, monsieur; very good!" In him I regretted sincerely the defender of my country and the generous man who had forgiven me; and to honour his memory as best I could, I wrote his epitaph thus:

A Courtray Fabius, Annibal à Bruxelles,
Sur la Meuse Condé, Turenne sur la Rhin,
Au léopard farouche il imposa le frein,
Et de l'aigle rapide il abattit les ailes.

The retreat where I saved myself from the temptations of Paris very soon offered me fresh ones; but for the moment gave me only serious moral lessons. To disclose the cause of the silent and heavy sadness that reigned then in a place that had always been the abode of pleasure, I must go back a little into the past and tell how this enchantment was created and destroyed.

M. de la Poplinière was not the richest financier of his time, but he was the most magnificent. At first he had taken as mistress and then as wife the daughter of a comédienne. It had not been his intention to marry her, but she had known how to make him: this is the way she did it. The famous de Tencin, after having raised her brother to the dignity of Cardinal and thrust him into the counsel of State, had through him a mysterious but powerful influence with old Cardinal Fleury. Mademoiselle Dancour had herself presented to her, and, as an innocent young thing who had been seduced, she lamented that M. de la Poplinière, after having cajoled her with the hope of being his wife, thought no more of marrying her. "He will marry you: I will make it my business," said Madame de Tencin. "Hide from him that you have seen me, and act innocence with him."

The critical moment of renewing the leases of the farms approached, and amongst the old farmers-general it was doubtful as to who should be kept on the list. Cardinal Fleury was made to understand that it was the time to stop a scandal that distressed all honest people. Mademoiselle Dancour was represented to him as an interesting victim of seduction, and la Poplinière as one of those men who mock at innocence, after having taken its weakness and trust unawares.

Publicly kept mistresses were not yet an authorised luxury amongst financiers; and the Cardinal plumed himself on maintaining good morals. So, then, when la Poplinière went to solicit his good offices for the lease, the Cardinal asked him who was Mademoiselle Dancour. " She is a young lady for whom I provide," answered la Poplinière; and he praised her wit, her talent, and her fine education. " I am very pleased," answered the Cardinal, " to hear so much good of her. Everyone says the same, and it is the King's intention to give your place to the man who marries her. It is very right that, after having seduced her, you should at least give her as dowry the estate she had a right to expect from you, and which you had promised her." La Poplinière wished to deny that he had made this promise. " You have deceived her," the minister insisted. " Were it not for you she would still be innocent. You must make amends for that wrong: that is the advice I give you; and do not delay in following it, for without that I can do nothing for you." Lose his estate or marry, the dilemma was acute. La Poplinière took the less disagreeable course, but wanted to give the appearance of free will to his forced decision; and the next morning, when Mademoiselle Dancour awoke, " Get up," he said, " and with your mother come where I am going to take you." She obeyed. It was to his notary that he took them. " Listen," he said, " to the reading of the document we are going to sign." It was the marriage contract. The dramatic surprise seemed to produce its effect: the daughter appeared to be swooning, the mother embraced the knees of the man who put the finishing touch to his kindness and their desires. He thoroughly enjoyed their feigned gratitude, and as long as he had the illusion of being a loved husband, he saw his house embellished by the enchantments of his brilliant wife. The very highest circles came to his suppers and fêtes; but soon uneasiness and jealous doubts troubled his peace. His wife had taken her flight.

Carried away in a whirlwind, he could not follow her; she was given suppers to which he was not invited, and a malicious pleasure was taken in warning him, through anonymous letters, that he was the laughing-stock and sport of the brilliant court his wife held in his house. It was about this time that he invited me there, but at first I was only of his especial circle. There I found the famous Rameau; Latour, the cleverest painter in pastel we have had; Vaucanson, that marvellous mechanician; Carl Vanloo, that great draughtsman and colorist; and his wife, who was the first, with her voice like a nightingale, to make known to us the songs of Italy.

Madame de la Poplinière showed me kindness. She wanted to hear "Aristomène" read to her; and of all the critics I have consulted, she was, to my thinking, the best. After having heard my play, she analysed it with a surprising clarity and precision; retraced the course of the action from scene to scene, noticing the places that had seemed fine to her, as well as those that appeared weak; and, in all the corrections she wanted, her observations struck me as so many flashes of light. This quick correctness of sight, so keen and yet so just, astonished everyone; and at this reading, although praised quite a lot myself, I must say that her success was more dazzling than mine. Her husband was sadly dumbfounded by it. Across his admiration for this happy facility of memory and understanding, for this ardour of eloquence that was almost inspiration, in a word, for this harmony of mind and taste that astonished him, as it did us, in his wife, one could see emerge, in spite of himself, the signs of some vexation and peevishness, whose cause was known only to him. He wanted to withdraw her from these high circles where she was launched; but the restraint he wished to put on her she called a capricious tyranny and humiliating slavery, and there were violent scenes between them when there were no witnesses.

La Poplinière comforted himself with us, especially with me, in satires on the society of which he was weary, he said, and which he wanted to leave. He had made me promise to live near him. My simplicity and freedom suited him. "Let us live together," he said to me. "We are made for one another, and leave this, believe me, this world that has captivated you, as it captivated me. What do you expect from it?" "Some patrons," I said, "and some means of making money." "Patrons! Oh, if you knew how all these people patronise! Money? And haven't I enough for us both? I have no child, and, thank Heaven, will never have one. Don't be uneasy; we will never leave each other, for every day I feel that you are more necessary to me."

In spite of his dislike at seeing me escape from him, he could not refuse Madame de Tencin, whom he treated deferentially out of prudence; he could not, he said, refuse to take me to her house in order to read my tragedy to her: it was "Aristomène," which had just been acted. The audience was large. I saw assembled Montesquieu, Fontenelle, Mairan, Marivaux, the young Helvetius, Astruc, and I don't know how many more, all writers or learned men, and in the midst of them a woman of profound mind and intelligence, but who, disguised by her appearance of good-nature and simplicity, had more the manner of a housekeeper than the mistress of the house: this was Madame de Tencin. I needed all my lungs to make myself heard by Fontenelle; and although quite close to his ear, I had still to pronounce every word with stress and in a loud voice; but he listened with such kindness that he sweetened the strain of this painful reading. It was, as you can imagine, extremely monotonous, without inflection or without shade.

Nevertheless I was honoured with the approbation of the assembly; I had even the honour of dining with Madame de Tencin; and from that day I have been inscribed on the list of her guests. But M. de la Poplinière had little trouble in persuading me that they were too witty for me; and in fact I soon noticed that people came there prepared to play their part; and the hankering to take the stage did not always allow the conversation freedom to follow its natural and easy course. It was who could seize the quickest, in its flight, the moment to put in his word, or tale, or anecdote, or maxim, or light and stinging dart; and to bring it in pertinently they sometimes had to go a long way round.

In Marivaux, the impatience to give proof of subtility and sagacity was easily discernible. Montesquieu, with more calmness, waited until the ball came to him; but he waited for it. Mairan watched for a chance. Astruc did not deign to wait. Fontenelle alone let it come to him without seeking for it, and he used the attention they gave to hear him so sparingly that the shrewd, keen words or charming tale never occupied more than a moment. Helvetius, watchful and discreet, gleaned that he might sow one day. He was an example I would not have had the patience to follow: therefore, this society had small attraction for me.

It was not the same with that of a woman whom my lucky star made me meet at Madame de Tencin's, and who then had the kindness to ask me to go and see her. This woman, who was beginning to select and compose her literary circle, was Madame Geoffrin. I responded too late to her invitation, and again it was M. de la Poplinière who prevented me from going to her. "What are you going to do there?" he said to me. "It is just another rendezvous of fine wits."

Thus it was that he controlled me when my adventure with Maréchal de Saxe happened; but what attached me so closely to him was his unhappiness, and to see the need he had of me. The anonymous letters never ceased worrying him: he was assured that even at Passy a successful rival continued to see his wife. He took note of it, and had her watched nigh and day; she was told of this, and considered him only as the jailer of her prison.

It was there I learnt what a household could be, where jealousy on one side, and hate on the other, glided about like two snakes. An epicurean house, in which the arts, and talents, and all honourable pleasures seem to have made their habitation, and in this house of luxury, the abundance and affluence of all good things corrupted by mistrust and fear, by the sad suspicions and dark griefs! If you could have seen those two, husband and wife, facing each other: the dismal taciturnity of the husband, the proud and cold indignation of the wife, the care they took to avoid each other's eyes, and the terrible and gloomy air with which they met, especially before their servants, the effort they had to make to address a few words to each other, and the dry, hard tone of their replies. It was difficult to conceive why two beings so deeply estranged could live together; but she was determined not to leave her house, and he, in the eyes of the world and in justice, had not the right to send her away.

I, who knew at last the cause of their discordance, neglected nothing to soften the grief of the man whose heart seemed to rest on mine. A wretch whom I disdain to name, because he is dead, has accused me of being one of de la Poplinière's mean flatterers. I begin by declaring that I have never received the slightest benefit from him. After that I acknowledge without blushing that, through a very unaffected and very tender feeling, I studied to please him. As far removed from flattery as from indifference, I did not fawn on him, but I consoled him; I rendered him the kind service that Horace attributed to the Muses: *Vos lene consilium et datis, te dato gaudetis, almæ.*

That sense of appropriateness that exaggerates in our eyes the value of all that interests us gave him so many illusions about the young poet he had adopted, that everything that flowed from my pen seemed beautiful to him; and instead of the severe friend I needed, I found him an only too indulgent approver. It is one of the causes to which I attribute the feebleness of mental effort to be felt in my work all the time I was with him.

One day his wife was going to attend a review to which she had been invited by the Maréchal de Saxe. La Poplinière tried to dissuade her, but she persisted; he grew angry, used threatening words and hinted at suspicions, whereupon she cried: "Go and soak in your gold!" and departed. In her absence he brought Vaucanson, the great mechanician and inventor, and Balot to the house and asked them to look over it.

While examining Madame de la Poplinière's apartment, Balot observed that in the small room where the harpsichord was they had put down a carpet, and that in the fireplace of this room there were neither wood, nor cinders, nor andirons, although the weather was already cold and fires were lit everywhere. Reasoning this out, he bethought himself of knocking the back of the fireplace with his cane; the back sounded hollow. Then Vaucanson, coming nearer, noticed that it was mounted on a hinge, and so perfectly joined to the casing that the join was almost imperceptible. "Oh, monsieur," he cried, turning to la Poplinière, "what fine work there is there! and what an excellent workman must have done that! This back is movable; it opens; but the hinge is so delicate! No . . .

there's not a snuff-box better made than this! What a clever man!" "What, monsieur," said la Poplinière, growing pale, "you are sure the back opens?" "Indeed, I am sure of it; I see it," said Vaucanson, transported with admiration and delight. "Nothing is more marvellous!" "And what is your marvel to me? This is a good place to admire it!" "Oh, monsieur, such workmen are extremely rare. I have good ones certainly; but I haven't one who . . ." "Stop talking about your workmen," interrupted la Poplinière, "and let them get me one who can open this fireback." It is a pity," said Vaucanson, "to break such a masterpiece as that."

Behind the fireplate, an opening made in the intermediate wall was closed with a panel of wood, which, covered by a mirror in the next house, opened at will, and gave free entry to the music-room to the clandestine tenant of the adjoining apartment. Unhappy la Poplinière, who only sought, I believe, a lawful way of getting rid of his wife, sent for a commissioner to establish immediately through an official declaration his discovery and disgrace.

His wife was still at the review when she was warned of what was going on at her house. In order to enter it again, either by force or freely, she begged Maréchal de Loewendahl to accompany her; but the door was shut to her, and the Maréchal would not take it on himself to force it. She applied for help to Maréchal de Saxe. "That I enter my house and speak to my husband . . . that is enough: you will have saved me." The Maréchal made her get into his coach, and, arriving at the door, got down and knocked himself. The faithful porter, half opening the door, wanted to say that he had been forbidden. . . . "And don't you know who I am?" the Maréchal said to him. "You must learn that there are no shut doors for me. Enter, madame, enter your own house." He gave her his hand, and went up with her.

La Poplinière, startled, went to meet him. "Well, my friend, what is it?" the Maréchal said to him. "A scandal, scenes, an amusement for the public? There is nothing for you to gain in all that except ridicule. Don't you see that they are only trying to embroil you together, and use all sorts of tricks to do it? Don't be duped by it. Listen to your wife, who will justify herself fully in your eyes and asks only to live decently with you." La Poplinière remained respectfully silent; and the Maréchal went away, recommending them seemliness and peace.

Alone with her husband, Madame de la Poplinière armed herself with all her courage and eloquence. She asked him what new suspicion, what fresh secret accusation had made him shut his door. And when he spoke of the fireplate she was indignant that he believed her a party to this guilty invention. Was it not rather to him than to her they wished to enter? And in order to obtain this passage from one house to the other, unknown to them, what did it need but a servant and two corrupt workmen? What? Is there any question of the cause of a so visibly invented stratagem, to make her lose favour with him? "I was too happy with you," she said to him, "and it is my happiness that rouses envy against me. The anonymous letters were not enough for them; they wanted proofs, and in their fury they thought of this detestable contrivance. What can I say? And since envy insists on persecuting me, have you not been able to see what my crime is in their eyes? What other woman in Paris has her peace and honour so violently attacked? Ah, I contributed to the happiness of a man whose mind, talents, importance and honourable life were a torment to the envious. It is you they want to make ridiculous and unhappy. Yes, that is the motive of the anonymous libels you get every day, and that is what they hope this vulgar trap will succeed in doing." Then, throwing herself at his feet: "Oh, monsieur, give me back your respect, your trust—I dare to say—your affection, and my love will avenge you, and myself, for the evil that our mutual friends have done to us."

Unfortunately too convinced, la Poplinière was unyielding. "Madame," he said to her, "all the cunning of your words does not make me alter my resolve: we will not live together any more. If you retire decently, without fuss, I will take care of your future. If you oblige me to use rigorous means to make you leave my house, I will use them, and all feeling of kindness or indulgence for you will be extinguished in my mind." She went. He gave her, I believe, twenty thousand livres pension for alimony, with which she went to live, or rather die, in an obscure retreat, abandoned by the fine world that had so flattered her, and now despised her in her misfortune. A gland in her breast was the seat of a corrosive humour that slowly wasted her. The Maréchal de Richelieu, who gave himself diversions and pleasures elsewhere, whilst she pined away in the cruellest suffering, did not cease paying her, cursorily, several dutiful kindnesses; therefore they said in the world, after she had died: "Really, M. de Richelieu behaved very admirably to her! He saw her up to her last moment."

It was to be loved thus that this woman, who, by honourable behaviour in her own home, might have enjoyed public respect, and the pleasure of a dignified and delightful life, had sacrificed her peace, her chastity, her fortune and all enjoyment; and what makes this frenzy of vanity all the more frightful is that her heart and senses had only a very light part in it. Madame de la Poplinière, with a lively enough head, was extremely cold; but a lady-killer duke had seemed, as to many others, a glorious conquest. It was that that lost her.

La Poplinière, separated from his wife, thought only of living as a rich and free man. His house at Passy became the most charming abode, but a most dangerous one for me. He had in his pay the best musical troupe known at that time. The instrumental players lived with him, and prepared together during the morning, with marvellous harmony, the symphonies they were to play in the evening. The best talent from the theatres, and especially the singers and dancers from the Opéra, came to adorn his suppers. At these suppers, after splendid voices had charmed the ear, you were agreeably surprised to see Lany, his sister, the young Pluvigné, leave the table to the sound of instruments and dance in the same room to airs played by the orchestra. All the clever musicians that came from Italy, violinists, singers, male and female, were received, lodged, and fed in his house, and each one vied with the other to shine at his concerts. Rameau composed his operas there; and on fête days, at mass in the private chapel, he played for us on the organ pieces of astonishing fervour. No citizen has ever lived more like a prince, and princes came to enjoy his entertainments.

In his theatre, for he had one, only comedies of his own were acted, and the actors were chosen from his circle. These comedies, although mediocre, were in good enough taste and well enough written to make praise not too great an act of kindness. Their success was all the more assured, as the performance was followed by a splendid supper, to which the flower of the audience, the ambassadors of Europe, the highest nobility, and the prettiest women in Paris were invited.

La Poplinière did the honours as a man who had acquired his ideas of propriety in the world; whose air, tone and manners had nothing but what was seemly; whose pride even knew how to disguise itself with modeſty and politeness, and who, in the deference he paid to the great, kept ſtill a certain air of unreserved and simple courtesy, which suited him well because it was natural to him. Nobody could be more amiable, when he wanted to please. He had wit and gallantry, and without ſtudy or much culture, quite a talent for verse-writing. Outside his house, those even who came to enjoy his luxury and extravagance did not fail to consider the life he led ridiculous; but inside one heard nothing but felicitations and praise, and with more or less complacency, everybody repaid in flattery the pleasure he had given them. As they said, he was very much of an old spoiled child of fortune; but I, who saw him habitually and closely and was diſtressed sometimes at finding him a little too vain, am aſtonished now that he was not more so.

A much more deplorable defect than this vanity of riches and oſtentation was a Tantalus thirſt he had for a different kind of voluptuousness, which he could no more, or very nearly no more, enjoy. Fontaine's financier complained that "they did not sell sleep in the market as they did food and drink." For him it was not sleep for which he would have paid its weight in gold.

Pleasures were urged on him; but in contraſt with the fortune that brought them to him in crowds, nature had prescribed a humiliating abſtinence; and this dilemma of continual temptation and continual privation was an agony to him. The unhappy man could not persuade himself that the cause was in himself. He never failed to blame the object of the moment; and every time a fresh subject seemed more attractive to him, he was gallant, sprightly, as if blossoming in a gentle ray of hope; then he was lovable. He told gay tales, he sang songs he had composed—in a ſtyle sometimes unrestrained, sometimes more delicate, according to the subject that inspired them; but lively and captivated as he had been in the evening, so much the more sad and dissatisfied was he the next day.

However I, surrounded by opportunities to err, was very far from being unerring. I knew perfectly well that it was harmful to me, and that to protect myself I ought to go away, but I hadn't the strength. The corridor where I lived was very often filled with girls from the theatre. With such neighbours it was difficult to save my hours of work or of sleep. The pleasures of the table helped to obscure my intellectual faculties. I had not suspected that temperance was the nurse of genius, but nevertheless nothing is truer. I woke with my head in disorder and my ideas impaired by the fumes of a copious supper; I was astonished that my senses were not as pure and free as in the Rue des Mathurins or in the Rue des Maçons. The imagination in its work does not wish to be embarrassed by the work of the other organs. The Muses, it has been said, are chaste; it must be added that they are sober: and, for me, both those maxims were in the profoundest oblivion.

I had finished the tragedy of "Cléopatra" carelessly, and this play, which in my collected works is to-day the one I have laboured over with most care, then showed signs, as I have said elsewhere, "of the haste with which one writes at an age when one has not yet realised how difficult it is to write well." It needed all the indulgence of the public to gain me the half-success of eleven performances. I had given on the stage the dénouement that history supplied, and Vaucanson had willingly invented an automatic aspic which, at the moment when Cléopatra presses it on her breast to provoke its bite, imitated the movement of a living aspic most realistically; but the surprise caused by this little masterpiece diverted attention from the real interest of the moment. I have since chosen a simpler dénouement. For the rest I must recognise that I presumed too much on my strength in hoping to make Antony's violence of aberration pardonable. It is a terrible instance of it, and the extreme difficulty is to make it affecting.

I sought for a more pathetic subject, and thought I had found it in the fable of the Heraclides. There was some resemblance to Iphigenia in Aulis; but in the characters and incidental action, the two subjects are so different that the Greek poet, Euripides, has used them both. Nevertheless, scarcely had my play been accepted and rehearsals begun, than a rumour ran about the town that, in a subject resembling one of Racine's, I wished to enter the lists with him.

At this rumour, spread around with the addition of noticeable ill-will, I saw that I had enemies; I was likewise warned that I had a multitude. I asked the reason of it—I did not know then—but since have known very well why. At the theatre, the gentle, treacherous Gaussin had alienated all his party from me, and it was a large one: for it was made up of, first, his friends, and then the enemies of Mademoiselle Clairon—to which rallied the zealous partisans of Mademoiselle Dumesnil. By her success, Clairon always took some part from one or the other of those actresses; and I, her faithful poet, was also the object of their enmity. Amongst the amateurs and intriguers of the green-room I had also all the enemies of Voltaire, and his enthusiasts besides, for they, less generous than he, could not tolerate any success above his. Many of the circles that I had neglected after having been received by them resented my not having responded more to their kindness; and la Poplinière's friendship for me made the hate of the envious burst out against me. Add to this a host of people naturally disposed to disparage those who rise, and to rejoice in the disgrace of anyone they have seen prosper, you can understand how, without having done any wrong to, or even borne malice against anybody, I had already so many enemies. I had some even among the young people who, having heard gossip about my frivolous adventures, and taking for granted that I had all their claims to puppyism in gallantry, could not forgive me for being their rival: which proves, by the way, that the ancient maxim, "Conceal your life," is more suitable to a writer than anyone, and that he is only allowed to be celebrated by his writings.

But a more terrible enemy than all those was the Procope Café. At first I had visited this café, the rendezvous of the frequenters and arbiters of the pit, and I was quite well welcomed there; but after the success of "Denys" and "Aristomène," I had been advised that it was imprudent to go there any more, and I had followed this advice. So sudden and abrupt a retirement had been attributed to vanity, and did me the greatest harm; as far as this sort of tribunal had been favourable to me, so far it went against me. My advice to you, children, is to be reserved in your youthful ties: for it is difficult to withdraw from binding ones without leaving bitter resentments and cruel enmities. Instead of loosening them imperceptibly I broke them, and it was a very great mistake.

Finally, too much sincerity, and perhaps too much stiffness in my character, would never permit me to conceal the contempt and aversion that filled me for those unfortunate journalists who "every day attack," as Voltaire said, "the best we have, and who praise the very worst and make the noble profession of letters as cowardly and contemptible a business as they are themselves." From my earliest success, they fell upon me like a swarm of wasps; and from Fréron to the Abbé Aubert, there is not one of those abject writers who did not revenge himself for my contempt by railing against all my works.

Such was the temper of one faction of the public when I published the tragedy of the "Heraclides." It is the most feebly written of my plays, but the most pathetic; and at rehearsals I cannot express the impression it made. Mademoiselle Dumesnil played the part of Dejanire, Mademoiselle Clairon that of Olympie, and in their scenes the expression of the mother's love and suffering was so heart-rending that she who played the daughter was overcome to the point of being unable to speak. The audience dissolved in tears. M. de la Poplinière, as well as all who assisted, prophesied a complete success.

I have told elsewhere how all the effect of this pathos was destroyed at the first performance, but what I could not explain in a preface I can say plainly in these private memories. Mademoiselle Dumesnil liked wine; it was her custom to drink a tumbler in between the acts, but diluted with enough water not to intoxicate her. Unfortunately that day her lackey poured it out neat unknown to her. In the first act she had just been sublime and applauded with rapture. All impetuous still she swallowed the wine, and it went to her head. In this state of drunkenness and stupefaction she played the rest of her part, or rather stammered it in such a wandering way, so devoid of sense, that the pathetic became ridiculous; and one knows that once the pit begins to take serious things jestingly nothing moves them any more.

As the public did not know what had happened behind the scenes, they did not fail to attribute the wildness of the actress to the rôle; and the rumour in Paris was that the tone of my play was so crazily and ludicrously unconventional that everyone had burst into laughter.

Although mademoiselle did not like me, she knew that she had contributed to my failure, and thought it her duty to make some effort to repair it. In spite of me they gave the play again: it was played by the two actresses as well as it could possibly be done; the few people who were there to see it shed gentle tears; but the hostile prejudice once established, the blow was struck. It could not rise from it, and at the sixth performance I wanted them to stop.

My children will have read elsewhere my description of the fête that awaited me at Passy on the day of the first performance of the "Heraclides," and the untoward accident which would have been the height of my humiliation, if I had not had the presence of mind to evade ridicule by putting on Mademoiselle Clairon's head the laurel wreath so inopportunely offered to me. I only recall this incident here to show how certainly M. de la Poplinière had counted on the success of my work. He persisted in the opinion he had of it, and redoubled the warmth of his friendship to drag me out of the dejection that prostrated me.

My mind, in rousing itself, became a little more masculine in character, and also acquired a touch of philosophy, thanks to adversity, and thanks perhaps to the connections I had formed. My delight in Passy did not make me forget Paris; and oftener than M. de la Poplinière liked, I made little excursions there. At my good Madame Harenc, whom I have never neglected, I made the acquaintance of d'Alembert and young Mademoiselle l'Espinasse: both of them accompanied Madame du Deffand every time she went there to supper. Here I will only name these interesting people: I will speak of them at leisure at a later period.

Another circle to which I was drawn, I do not know any more how, was that of Baron de Holbach. There I knew Diderot, Helvetius, Grimm and J. J. Rousseau, before he made himself unsociable (*sauvage*). Grimm, then secretary and intimate friend of the young Comte de Frise, nephew of Maréchal de Saxe, gave us a dinner every week at his house; and an open-hearted freedom reigned at this bachelor dinner; but it was a dish that Rousseau only tasted very sparingly. Nobody observed better than he the dreary maxim to "live with your friends as if one day they will be your enemies." When I knew him, he had just carried away the prize for eloquence at the Academy of Dijon with the fine fallacy in which he ascribes the natural effects of prosperity and luxury in nations to the arts and sciences. However, he had not then developed as he has since, and did not announce his ambition to form a sect. Either his pride was not born, or he hid it under an outside of timid politeness, sometimes even obsequious and tending towards humility. But in his timorous reserve one saw mistrust; his sly glance watched everything with suspicious attention. He was not at all communicative and never confiding. He was not less amicably received because of that, as he was known to be troubled in his self-esteem, touchy, easy to wound, he was pampered, treated carefully with the same care and delicacy one would have used in regard to a pretty woman who was very capricious, very vain, and whom one wanted to please. He was working then at the music of the "Devin du Village," and sang the airs he had composed to us on the harpsichord. We were charmed with them; we were no less charmed by the vigorous, spirited, and profound manner his first essay in eloquence was written. Nothing was more sincere, I must say, than our kindness for himself and our consideration for his gifts. It is the memory of that time that has made me indignant with him, when I have seen him, for trifles or when he was wrong himself, slander people who treated him so well and only wanted to like him. I have lived with them all their lives; I will have occasion to speak of their minds and souls. I have never perceived anything in them resembling the character his evil genius attributed to them.

For my part, the little time we were together in their circle passed, between him and me, coldly without affection, without aversion for each other; we had no reason to complain and no reason to be satisfied with the way we were together; and in what I have said of him and what I can still say, I feel myself perfectly free from personal feeling. But what I gained from intercourse with him and his example was renewed reflection on the imprudence of my youth. Here is, I said to myself, a man who has given himself time to think before writing; and I, in the most difficult and dangerous of arts, hurry to produce something almost before having thought. Twenty years of study and meditation in silence and retreat have accumulated, ripened, and made fruitful his knowledge; and I pour out my ideas when they have hardly flowered, and before they have acquired strength or growth. Therefore one sees in his writings an astonishing abundance and perfect virility; and in mine, all show signs of immaturity, or the weakness of a talent that has not been nourished long enough by study and meditation. My sole excuse was want of fortune, and the necessity to work incessantly and hastily in order to get the wherewithal to live. I resolved to pull myself out of this sad condition, even if I had to give up writing.

I had some access to the court, and M. Orry's loss of favour had not taken away all hope of fortune. The same woman whose influence had had him dismissed was grateful to me more than once for having been the echo of the public voice in verses where I sang the praise of what was worthy in the reign of her lover. A little poem that I had written on the founding of the military school, a monument raised to the glory of the King by the Paris, bosom friends of Madame de Pompadour; this little poem had interested her, and put me in favour with her. The Abbé de Bernis and Duclos went to see her together every Sunday; and as they were both friendly to me, I made a third with them. This woman, to whom the highest in the kingdom and princes of the blood themselves paid their court at her toilette, simple townswoman, who had the weakness to wish to please the King, and was unfortunate enough to succeed, was, in her exalted state, the best woman in the world. She received us all familiarly, although with very noticeable shades of distinction. To one she said, with superficial air and curt speech, "Bonjour, Duclos"; to the other with a more friendly tone and manner, "Bonjour, Abbé," giving him occasionally a little slap on the cheek; and to me, more seriously and lower, "Bonjour, Marmontel." Duclos' ambition was to make himself important in his province of Brittany; the ambition of the Abbé de Bernis was to have a small lodging in the roof of the Tuileries, and a pension of fifty louis from the King's privy purse; my ambition was to be usefully occupied for myself and the public without depending on its whims. It was quiet and industrious work I besought. "I feel I have only a mediocre talent for poetry," I said to Madame de Pompadour, "but I think I have enough sense and intelligence to fill a position in the offices; however hard the work, I am capable of it. Persuade them, madame, to try me; I dare assure you that they will be pleased with me." She answered that I was born to be a man of letters; that my distaste for poetry was lack of courage; instead of giving up the game I ought to take my revenge, as Voltaire did more than once, and rise, as he did, from a downfall to success. I consented to please her, to try myself on a fresh subject; but I took a too simple one and one above my strength.

Historical subjects seemed to me to be exhausted; I found all the great interests of the human heart, all the violent passions, all the tragic situations, in a word, all the great motives of terror and compassion, used before me by the masters of the art. I racked my brains to invent a new plot out of the common rut. I believed I had found it in an imaginative subject, about which I was at first infatuated. It gave me a chance of a show of imposing majesty ("Les Funerailles de Sesostris"); it gave me great characters to depict in contrast and situation, and an intrigue so firmly and closely knotted that it would be impossible to foresee the solution. I made myself giddy with the difficulties of a plot without love, all politics and ethics, and which, to be sustained with ardour during five acts, demanded all the resources of poetic eloquence. I did my best; and whether it was illusion, or excessive kindness, they persuaded me that I had succeeded. Often Madame de Pompadour asked me how my new play was getting on; she wished to read it when it was finished, and with some justice criticised several details, but the whole seemed good to her.

A memory comes back to me here which may enliven for a moment the account of my bad luck. Whilst the manuscript of my play was in the hands of Madame de Pompadour, I presented myself one Sunday at her toilette, in the salon where the crowd of courtiers who came to assist at the King's levee ebbed and flowed. She was surrounded by it; and whether there was someone there who offended her sight, or whether she wanted to make some diversion from the boredom of all these people, as soon as she saw me, "I want to speak to you," she said to me, and leaving her dressing-table passed into her closet, where I followed her. It was quite simply to return me my manuscript, on which she had pencilled some notes. She was five or six minutes showing me the places noted, and explaining her criticisms. However, the whole circle of courtiers were standing round her dressing-table, waiting for her. She reappeared, and I, hiding my manuscript, came modestly to take my place again. I suspected the effect such a strange incident would produce, but the impression it made on their minds passed my expectations by a long way. All their glances were fixed on me, on all sides little imperceptible bows were given me and sweet smiles of friendship; and, before leaving the salon, I was invited to dinner for at least the whole of the week. Shall I say it? A man of title, a man of decorations, with whom I dined sometimes at M. de la Poplinière's, a certain M.D.S., finding himself beside me, took my hand and said in a low voice: "You don't want to recognise your old friends?" I bowed, confused by his baseness, and said to myself: "Oh, what is favour then, if just its shadow gives me so strange an importance?"

The actors were beguiled at the reading, as Madame de Pompadour was, by the beauty of the customs with which I had decorated the last acts of my play; but their weakness was manifest in the theatre, and felt all the more because I had put more fervour and vehemence in the earlier ones. There is nothing tragic in the struggle between generosity and virtue. The public were bored at not being moved and my play failed. This time I recognised that the public were right.

I returned to my rooms determined to work no more for the theatre; and by a messenger I wrote immediately to Madame de Pompadour, who was at Bellevue, to tell her of my misfortune, and to renew with urgency my prayer that she should get work for me where I could be more usefully employed than in an art for which I was not created.

She was at table with the King when she received my letter; and the King having permitted her to read it, "The new play has failed," she said to him, "and do you know, sire, who has told me? The author himself. Unhappy young man! I would like to have a position to offer him at this moment, to console him." Her brother, the Marquis de Marigny, who was at this supper, said that he had a position of Secretary to the Public Buildings to give me if she liked. "Ah, then, I beg you write to him to-morrow," she said; and the King seemed pleased that I should be given this consolation.

This letter, in which M. de Marigny, in the kindest and most amiable way, offered me a post, not a lucrative one, he said, but quiet—that would leave me leisure to give to the Muses, caused me an impulse of joy and gratitude of which my reply was the expression. I felt I was safe in harbour after my shipwreck, and clung to the hospitable ground that assured me of sweet rest.

M. de la Poplinière heard with some vexation that I was going to leave him. In his lamentations, he repeated what he had said to me many times, that I need not distress myself about my future, that it was his intention to take care of it. I answered that in renouncing the position of a writer I did not mean to live as a useless and idle man; but that I was none the less grateful to him for his kindness. In fact, it would be thankless of me, after having told the involuntary share he had in the harm I did myself, not to add that on many other accounts the time I spent with him ought to be dear to my memory, through the feeling of trust and esteem he showed he had for me, and for the kindness he inspired in all those who heard him speak of my good disposition; for that was what above all he praised in me.

At his house there followed one after the other, as in a moving picture, people of different manners, minds and characters. Frequently I saw the ambassadors of Europe there, and I learnt from them. It was there that I knew Comte de Kaunitz, then ambassador from the court of Vienna, and since the most celebrated statesman in Europe. He was friendly with me; often I went to dine with him at the Bourbon Palais, and he spoke to me about Paris and Versailles as a man who knew them well. But I must confess that what struck me most in him was the delicacy and vanity of an effeminate mind. I thought he was more occupied with the care of his health and his figure, and particularly of his complexion and the arrangement of his hair, than with the interests of his court. I surprised him one day, coming back from a hunting expedition, with his face covered with the yolk of an egg to take away the sunburn; and I heard a long time after from the Comte de Par, his cousin, a simple, unaffected man, that all the time of his long and glorious ministry, when he was the soul of the Viennese Council, he had preserved in its luxury and effeminacy, and in all the meticulous care of his dress and person, the same character that I had known in him. Of all the people I have known in the world, he was the one in whom I was most grossly mistaken.

However, I remember several of his remarks which should have made me think about the cast of his mind and heart.

"What do they say about me in the world?" he asked me one day. "They say, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, that your excellency does not keep up the idea of magnificence your arrival in Paris gave them. The chief ambassadorship in Europe, a great fortune, a palace for your house, the pageantry of your most gorgeous entry, announced more luxury and splendour in your way of living and in your home. A sumptuous table, feasts and entertainments, especially balls—a ball in your superb salons, that is what they expected of you; and one sees nothing of all that. You spend your time with wives of business men like a simple private person, and you neglect the highest circles in town and at court."

"My dear Marmontel," he said to me, "I am only here for two things: on my sovereign's business, and that I do well; and for my pleasure, and on that point I consult only myself. Public exhibitions are boring and irksome to me, and that is why I dispense with them. At Versailles there is not one scheming woman that is worth the trouble of winning. What should I do with those women? Their ombre? Their dull *cavagnole*? I have two people I must manage carefully, the King and his mistress: I am on good terms with both of them." This was not the speech of a frivolous or trifling man.

Nevertheless his little dinners were exceedingly good: Merci, Staremberg, Seckendorf, the three gentlemen attached to his embassy, or rather his pupils, treated me with kindness; we chatted there quite gaily, and a flagon of Tokay enlivened the end of the meal.

Someone quite different to Comte de Kaunitz, and more loving and lovable, was Lord Albemarle, ambassador from England, who died in Paris, regretted by us as much as in his own country. He was, pre-eminently, what is called a man of honour: noble, sensitive, generous, full of loyalty, frankness, courtesy and kindness; he united what was best and worthiest in the English and French character. His mistress was an accomplished girl, and one whom envy itself had never reproached with anything but giving herself to him. I made myself her friend; it was a sure way of making a friend of milord d'Albemarle. The name of this dear person was Gaucher: her childhood's and pet name was Lolotte. One night, when she was looking fixedly at a star, her lover said to her: "Do not look at it so much, my dear; I cannot give it to you." Love has never been so delicately expressed. That of milord reverenced its object with the highest esteem and tenderest respect, and he was not the only one who felt for her in that way. As wise as she was beautiful, one man only knew how to please her; and the most excusable of sins when extreme youth is prevailed upon innocently had taken in her a character of nobility and honesty that vice has never had. Fidelity, modesty, disinterestedness—nothing was wanting to her love to make it virtuous. These two lovers would have made a perfect pattern of husband and wife.

The character of mademoiselle was artlessly expressed in her whole person. In her beauty there was I cannot say what of the romantic and fabulous, that one had never seen until then except in fancy. Her body had the majesty of the cedar with the litheness of the poplar; her carriage was indolent, but in this careless bearing there was a natural seemliness and grace. It was after her image, so present in my fancy, that I drew the Shepherdess of the Alps. A quick imagination and cool reason gave her mind much the manner of Montaigne's. He was her favourite and customary reading: her speech was imbued with it; it had the ingenuousness, the colour and abandonment, very often the energetic turn and felicity of expression.

As far as it is possible to be charmed by a woman and not be in love with her, so far I was charmed by her. After Voltaire's conversation, hers was the most entrancing to me. We became intimate friends from the moment we knew each other.

She lost milord d'Albemarle: he had provided her with, I think, an income of two thousand crowns; that was the whole of her fortune. Her sorrow at his death was profound, but courageous; and in grieving with her I helped her to endure her distress. All milord's friends were hers; they remained faithful to her. The Duc de Biron, the Marquis de Castries, and several others of the same rank, composed her circle. How happy it would have been had she not been thrown, by a sort of fatality, from this gentle situation in which she was content, into an existence that was not hers.

Her health had weakened; we were uneasy about it, and the waters of Barèges were advised. In passing and repassing through Montauban, she was magnificently entertained by the commanding officer, Comte d'Hérouville, and on arriving in Paris she received a letter from him written in pretty much these words: "I am poisoned; and all my household with me. Come to my aid, mademoiselle, and bring a doctor with you. I trust only in you." She left in a post-chaise with a clever doctor, and M. d'Hérouville was saved. He had already been seized with that enthusiasm for her which in old men of alert minds is very much like love. The service she had rendered him only added to it. He had seen her at the head of his house establishing order and calm in it, giving hope to his people who were being tortured by verdegris, reassuring himself, and, together with Dr. Malouet, performing for their morale, his work of healing. So much courage and so much zeal had captivated his admiration; and from the moment he was out of danger, he could only express his gratitude by saying to her, as Medor said to Angelique:

Vous servir est ma seule envie,
J'en fais mon espoir le plus doux :
Vous m'avez conservé la vie ;
Je ne la cheris que pour vous.

At first she was wise enough to resist his entreaties, but she gave in weakly at the end, on condition, however, that their marriage remained a secret: it was for some time, but she became a mother, and it had to be made public.

Then the only wise conduct for both of them (and it was the advice I gave to my friend) would have been to confine themselves to the society of men whom they could have chosen as they pleased, to make it agreeable and, if possible, attractive for their wives also, or to do without them without seeming to think about it. Madame d'Hérouville knew perfectly that this was the only behaviour that suited her; but her husband wanted all the world to admire her.

It was also at M. de la Poplinère's that I became intimate with the Chalut family, and have several times expressed my delight in them in these memoirs: I saw them die out before my very eyes.

Finally, I owe the advantage of sometimes seeing that extraordinary woman alone to the proximity of the country house where I lived to that of Madame de Tencin at Passy. I had refused the honour of being admitted to her dinners to men of letters; but when she came to rest in her retreat, I used to spend some time with her when she was alone; and I cannot express the effect on me of her air of nonchalance and freedom. Madame de Tencin, who, in the politics of the realm, stirred up more activities than anyone in town or court, seemed only an indolent old lady to me. "You do not like," she said to me, "my gathering of fine wits; their presence intimidates you: well, come and talk to me in my solitude; you will be happier, and your disposition will accommodate itself better to my solid good sense." She made me tell her my history from childhood, entered into all my interests, was distressed by all my griefs, reasoned with me over my opinions and hopes, and seemed to have nothing else on her mind but my cares. Ah, what keenness of mind, what subtility and energy, her artless manner and apparent calm and leisure hid from me! I laugh still at the simplicity with which I exclaimed to myself, as I left her: "The kind creature!" The benefit

I gained from these conversations, without noticing it, was a wiser and deeper knowledge of the world. For instance, I remember two counsels she gave me: one was to make certain of a living apart from literary success, and to give only my superfluous time to such a lottery. "Woe to him who expects everything from his pen! Nothing is more precarious. A man who makes shoes is sure of his wage; the man who writes a book or a tragedy is never sure of anything." The other piece of advice was to make friends of women rather than men. "For by means of women," she said, "one does what one likes with men: for they are, some too dissipated, others too absorbed in their own concerns, not to neglect yours; instead of which, women think of them, if only for want of occupation. Talk to your woman friend one evening of some business that affects you; the next day at her spinning-wheel, or her tapestry, she will be dreaming of it, searching in her mind for some means of helping you. But with those whom you think will be helpful, guard yourself well from being anything but a friend; for, between lovers, from the moment clouds appear, and misunderstandings and breakings-off, all is lost. So with her be assiduous, obliging, gallant even if you like, but nothing more—you understand." So in all our talks, her unaffected speech impressed me so much that I never took her wit for anything but good sense.

A connection I made of another sort with Cury and his comrades, directors of the Menus-Plaisirs, dates from this time. It cost me dear, as will be seen later. But as to the present, this is how it happened: Quinault was one of my most beloved poets. Feeling the harmony of his beautiful verse, charmed by the elegant ease of his style, I never read the lovely scenes of "Proserpine," "Thésée and Armide," without being seized with a desire to write an opera, perhaps some hope of writing as he did—vain presumption of youth!—

but which would laud the poet who inspired me; for one characteristic of beauty, as Horace has said, is to appear easy of imitation, and be in effect inimitable:

> *Ut sibi quivis*
> *Speret idem; sudet multum, frustraque laboret*
> *Ausus idem.*

On the other hand I lived with Rameau: I watched him work on bad poems, and wanted very much to give him better ones.

I was in this frame of mind, when at the birth of the Duc de Bourgogne, the Provost of merchants, Bernage, came to Passy and suggested that I should write with Rameau an opera about this happy event, and one capable of being made into a splendid spectacle. It was necessary that this work, both words and music, should be finished quickly and by a certain day.

You may well surmise that the affair was roughly sketched in on both sides. However, "Acanthe and Cephise" was a spectacle with movable scenery; the theatrical changes, the loveliness of the scenery, several magnificent harmonic effects, and perhaps also the interesting situations, upheld it. It had, I believe, fourteen performances; that was a great many for a work that had been commissioned.

I did less badly two separate acts which Rameau still wished to set to music, La Guirlande and Les Sybarites. But at our concerts I had heard pieces of melody after which French music seemed to me monotonous and heavy. The airs and duets and rhythmic recitatives, by which the Italians composed their lyrical scenes, charmed my ear and enraptured my mind. I studied the forms, I attempted to mould and accommodate them to our language, and I would have liked Rameau to undertake to transfer these riches and beauties to our theatre: but Rameau was already old, and not inclined to change his method;

he would only see the vices and abuses of the Italian method and pretended to despise it. The loveliest airs of Leo, of Vinci, or Pergolesi, and Jomelli made him impatiently take flight; it was not until long afterwards that I found composers ready to listen to me and second me. But from that time I was known at the Opéra amongst the amateurs, at whose head, whether for singing or dancing, or for pleasure also, the directors of the Menus-Plaisirs were notable; I joined them because of that self-indulgent tendency we have to enjoy life; and intercourse with them had all the more attraction for me, in that it gave me, so joyously, characteristic traits of the most pithy originality, and gay witticisms in the best taste and manner. Cury, the chief of this merry band, was a man of wit, a fine jester, with a sharp savour to his serious irony, but more roguish than malicious. The epicurean Tribou, a disciple of Père Porée, and one of his most beloved pupils, since then an actor at the Opéra—after withdrawing in favour of Géliote, he lived contentedly and freely on very little—was charming in his old age through an anacreontic humour which never left him. He is the only man I have known who said farewell gaily to the pleasures of his prime, and let himself go smoothly down the years, preserving in his decline that "lusty, gay and ingenuous philosophy" which Montaigne himself attributes only to youth. A character of a different temper, and just as lovable in its way, was Géliote's: gentle, laughing, *amistoux*—to use a word of his country and paint him in natal colours—he carried on his brow a serene happiness, and, breathing it himself, he inspired others with it. In fact, if anyone should ask me who is the most perfectly happy man I have known in my life, I would answer—Géliote. Born in obscurity, and in adolescence a choir-boy of a church in Toulouse, he had come to the Opéra and made his début right away, and had the most brilliant success: from that moment he had been, and was still, the idol of the public. They shivered with joy whenever he came on the stage; they listened to him with an ecstatic pleasure, and applause always marked the cessation of his voice. This voice was the rarest ever heard, either in volume and fulness of sound, or the penetrating brilliance of its silvery tone-quality. He was neither handsome nor well made, but he had only to sing to make himself beautiful; you might say he charmed the eye whilst he enraptured the ear. Young women were mad about him: you saw them, half out of their boxes, exhibiting their excessive emotion before the whole theatre; and more than one of the most beautiful of them would willingly have given him proof of it. A fine musician, difficulties disappeared before his talent, and his position held no hardship. Beloved and valued by his comrades, with whom he was on terms of friendly courtesy without familiarity, he lived as a man of the world, desired and welcomed everywhere. At first it was his singing they wanted to hear—and he had a willingness to please that delighted one as much as his voice. He had studied to find and learn our prettiest songs, and sang them to his guitar in the most entrancing way; but soon they forgot the singer in him to delight in the charming man; and his wit and character made him as many friends as he had admirers. He had them amongst the middle-classes and the highest circles; and natural and modest at all times, he was never out of place. Through his talent and the favours it had brought him, he had acquired a creditable little fortune; and the first use he made of it was to put his family in comfort. In public offices and ministerial cabinets he enjoyed very considerable influence, for it was the influence that pleasure gives; and he used this to give necessary help to his natal province—where he was adored. Every year, in the summer, he was allowed to make a tour there, and from Paris to Pau his route was known; from town to town the time of his passing through was marked, and everywhere fêtes awaited him; and about this I must say something I knew before my departure from Toulouse. He had two friends in that town who were preferred before all others: one was the tailor with whom he lodged, the other, his music-master when he was a choir-boy. The nobility and Parliament disputed who should give Géliote's second supper in Toulouse, but the first was known to be unalterably reserved for his two friends. As much, and more, of a fortunate lover than he liked to be, he was famed for his discretion; and of his numerous conquests, one only heard of those who wished to make themselves notorious. In a word, amidst all his prosperity he never roused envy, and I have never heard anyone say that Géliote had an enemy.

The rest of the company of the Menus-Plaisirs were simply devotees of pleasure; and amongst them, I can say I held my own with some distinction.

Now, after dining merrily with these gentlemen, think of me going on to the School of Philosophers, or to the performance of the clowns just come from Italy, in the famous *Queen's corner*; slipping in amongst Diderot, d'Alembert, Buffon, Turgot, d'Holbach, Helvétius, Rousseau; burning with zeal for Italian music; full of ardour for the building of the immense edifice of the Encyclopedia, of which the foundations were being laid; you might really rather have said of me what Horace said of Aristippus: *Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status, et res.*

Yes, I confess it—nothing came amiss to me, pleasure, study, feasting, philosophy; I liked wisdom with the wise, and willingly surrendered myself to folly with the foolish. My character was still wavering, changeable and inconsequent; I adored virtue, I yielded to the example and attraction of vice. I was content and happy when in d'Alembert's little room at the house of his excellent glazier's wife, dining frugally alone with him, I listened to him—after he had been working on advanced geometry all the morning—speak as a man of letters, full of discernment, wit and knowledge; or on ethical questions, displaying the wisdom of a mature mind and the playfulness of a young unconstrained soul, he would survey the world with the eye of a Democritus, and make me laugh at its stupidity and arrogance. I was also happy, but in a light and more transient way, in the midst of a bevy of sports and pleasure-lovers escaped from behind the scenes, at table with our amateurs, amongst the Nymphs and Graces, and sometimes the Bacchantes, where I heard the praise of love and wine only. I left all that to go to Versailles; but before separating myself from the heads of the Encyclopedia, I promised to contribute to the part on literature; and encouraged by the praise they gave my work, I did more than I had hoped and more than they expected of me.

Voltaire was then absent from Paris; he was in Prussia. The thread of my narrative seems to have drawn me away from my connection with him, but up to his departure it had been the same, and the griefs he had suffered seemed to have knit us still closer to each other. Of these griefs, the most keen for a short while was the death of the Marquise du Châtelet; but, to make no pretence, I must admit the fickleness of his mind on this occasion and on many others. When I went to show him my concern over his affliction, "Come," he said, when he saw me, "come and share my sorrow. I have lost my illustrious friend; I am in despair—inconsolable." And I, to whom he had often said that she was like a fury on his heels, and who knew that many times in their quarrels they were at daggers drawn with one another—I let him weep and appeared to sympathise with him. But, to make him see, in the very cause of this death, a reason for consolation, I asked him of what she had died. "Of what! Don't you know? Oh, my friend, he killed her, the brute! He gave her a child." This was Saint Lambert, his rival. And then he praised this incomparable woman and redoubled his sobs and tears. At this moment the director Chauvelin arrived and told some humorous tale—I don't know what—and Voltaire burst out laughing. I laughed too, as I left, to see the childlike ease with which this great man went from one extreme to the other in the passions that moved him. One only was fixed in him, as if inherent in his soul, and this was ambition and love of glory; and he was indifferent to nothing that nourished and flattered this passion.

It was not enough for him to be the most renowned man of letters; he wanted to be a gentleman of the court. From his earliest youth he had formed the pleasing habit of living with the great. First, the Maréchale de Villars, the Grand Prior of Vendôme, and afterwards, the Duc de Richelieu, the Duc de la Vallière, the Boufflers, the Montmorencys—were his world. He supped with them habitually, and one knows with what respectful familiarity he wrote and spoke to them. Delicately and lightly flattering verses and conversation not less fascinating than his poems, made this aristocratic society entertain and love him. Now the aristocracy were admitted to the King's suppers. Why was he not? It was what he longed for. He recalled the welcome Louis the Great gave to Boileau and Racine; he said that Horace and Virgil had the honour to approach Augustus; that the "Æneid" had been read in Livy's study. Were Addison and Prior worth more than he? Hadn't they been honourably employed in their country—one in the ministry, the other in the diplomatic service? The post of historiographer was already a sign of confidence; and who, before him, had filled it so brilliantly? He had purchased the office of gentleman-in-ordinary to the King's chamber: this office, generally quite unimportant, gave however, the right to be sent on slight commissions to sovereigns; and he had hoped that, for such a man as he, these commissions would not be narrowed down to sterile messages of condolence or felicitation. He wished to advance at court, as they say; and when he had a plan in his head, he kept to it obstinately. One of his maxims was these words of the Evangelist: *Regnum cœlorum vim patitur*, *et violenti rapiunt illud*, so he used all imaginable means in order to get near the King.

When Madame d'Etioles, since then Madame de Pompadour, was announced as the King's mistress, and even before she was declared as such, he hastened to pay his court to her. He succeeded easily in pleasing her; and when he celebrated the King's victories, he flattered the mistress by writing pretty verses for her. He did not doubt that he would gain through her the favour of being admitted to the suppers in private audience, and I am sure she wished to do it.

Transplanted to the court, and ill-informed as to the character and tastes of the King, she had at first hoped to amuse him by her gifts. She acted before him, in a private theatre, short operatic acts—some of which were written for her—and in which her playing, her voice and singing were rightly applauded. Voltaire, who was in her favour, took it into his head to want to direct this entertainment. Alarm spread in the camp of gentlemen of the bedchamber and the directors of the Menus-Plaisirs. This was infringing their rights, and they formed a league to banish a man who would eventually dominate them all, if he pleased the King as much as the mistress; but they knew the King did not like him, and that his eagerness to put himself forward added still more to his prejudice against him. Little moved by the praises he had given him in his panegyric, he saw only in him an impious philosopher and an ambitious flatterer. Only with great difficulty had he at last consented to have him admitted to the French Academy. Without counting the friends of religion, who were not at all Voltaire's friends, there were round the King those who were jealous and envious of the favour Voltaire intrigued for, and these were watchful to blame all he did to please. According to them the poem on Fontenoy was just a cold newspaper report; the panegyric of the King was lifeless, without colour or eloquence; the verses to Madame de Pompadour were taxed with being indecent and indiscreet; and in these lines above all:

Soyez tous deux sans ennemis,
Et gardez tous deux vos conquêtes—

the King was made to feel that it was unseemly to put him on a level and a par with his mistress.

At the marriage of the Dauphin with the Spanish Infanta it was easy to point out the unsuitability and ridiculousness of giving as entertainment for the Infanta the "Princess of Navarre," which, truly, was not likely to be successful. I do not say the same of the opera "Temple de la Gloire": the idea was a great one, the subject was well-conceived and worthily executed. The third act, in which Trajan was the hero, was a flattering allusion to the King: he was a just, humane, generous, pacific hero, deserving the love of mankind, to whom the temple of glory was opened. Voltaire never suspected that the King would not recognise himself in this eulogy. After the performance, finding himself in the King's path, and seeing that His Majesty was passing without saying anything to him, he took the liberty of asking him: "Is Trajan pleased?" Trajan, surprised and ill-pleased that anyone should dare to interrogate him, answered with a cold silence; and the whole court thought it wrong that Voltaire should dare put questions to the King.

To banish him, it was only necessary to alienate the mistress, and the way they took to do this was to set up Crébillon against him.

The latter, poor and old, lived with his dogs in the depths of the Marais, working by fits and starts at the "Catalina" he had announced he had been writing on for ten years, and of which he read here and there several scraps of scenes, which were considered admirable. His age and successes, his rather savage ways and soldierly character, his truly tragic face, the manner, and imposing yet simple tone in which he read his harsh and austere verses, the vigour and energy he gave his expression, all co-operated to strike people with enthusiasm. I have heard the lines he put in the mouth of Cicero applauded with rapture by people who were not stupid:

Catalina, je crois que tu n'es point coupable:
Mais si tu l'es, tu n'es qu'un homme détestable;
Et je ne vois en toi que l'esprit et l'éclat
Du plus grand des mortels, ou du plus scélérat.

The name of Crébillon was the rallying word of Voltaire's enemies. "Electra" and "Rhadamisthe," which were acted sometimes, attracted very few people; all Crébillon's other tragedies were forgotten, whilst of Voltaire's "Œdipe," "Alzire," "Mahomet," "Zaïre," "Mérope," filled the theatre with all the brilliance of complete success. Crébillon's faction, small in number but noisy, called him the Sophocles of our century, and even amongst writers such as Marivaux, it was said that before Crébillon's genius all Voltaire's fine wit must pale and be eclipsed.

They spoke before Madame de Pompadour of this great man—abandoned, allowed to grow old without help because he did not scheme and plot. That was to touch her most vulnerable spot. "What do you say?" she cried. "Crébillon is poor and forsaken!" Immediately she obtained a pension of a hundred louis from the privy purse for him from the King.

Crébillon hastened to go and thank his benefactress. A slight indisposition kept her in bed when he was announced, but he was told to enter. The sight of this handsome old man touched her; she received him with a touching grace. He was moved by this, and as he bent over her bed to kiss her hand the King appeared. "Oh, madame," cried Crébillon, "the King has surprised us; I am lost." This sally from an old man of eighty pleased the King, and Crébillon's success was decided. All the members of the Menus-Plaisirs burst out into eulogies over his genius and habits. They said: "He has pride but no arrogance, and still less vainglory. His want of fortune is proof of disinterestedness. His is a character of antiquity, and truly a man whose genius is an honour to the King's reign." They spoke of "Catalina" as the marvel of the century. Madame de Pompadour wished to hear it. The day for the reading was arranged; the King, invisible but present, heard it. It had a complete success; and when "Catalina" was put on at the theatre, Madame de Pompadour, accompanied by a throng of courtiers, attended the performance and displayed the liveliest interest. Shortly afterwards, Crébillon was favoured by an edition of his works being made at the Louvre press, at the expense of the royal treasury. Thenceforward Voltaire was coldly received and ceased to go to court. His relationship with the Prince Royal of Prussia was known. This Prince, on becoming King, showed him the same kindness; and perhaps the infinitely flattering way Voltaire responded, had secretly contributed to estrange the mind of Louis XV. from him. The King of Prussia in correspondence with Voltaire had, since his accession to the crown, always been inviting him to go to him; the favour Crébillon enjoyed at court having stung him to the quick, he decided to make the journey. But before leaving, he wished to avenge himself for this unpleasantness, and did it in the manner of a great man: he attacked his adversary at close quarters, measuring himself with him in the subjects he had taken, excepting only "Rhadamisthe," "Atrée" and "Pyrrhus"; from one out of respect doubtless, from the other in horror, and the third in disdain for so barren and fantastic a subject.

He began with "Semiramis"; and the grand tragic way he conceived the action, the gloomy, violent and terrorful hue he spread over it, the magic of his style, the religious and formidable majesty with which he filled it, the heart-rending scenes and situations, in a word, the art with which he knew how to prepare, establish and maintain the marvellous, promised well to annihilate Crébillon's cold and feeble "Semiramis"; but at that time the theatre was incapable of a plot of this character. The scene-space was contracted by a crowd of spectators, some on seats raised one above the other, some standing at the back of the stage and along the wings, so that lost Semiramis and the shade of Nimos coming from his tomb were obliged to cross in front of a thick hedge of coxcombs. This unseemliness threw ridicule over the seriousness of the dramatic action. There is no interest if there is no illusion, and no illusion without some sense of probability; and this play, Voltaire's masterpiece of genius, had in its novelty a small enough success to make people say it had failed. Voltaire shuddered with anguish but was not disheartened. He wrote "Oreste" in the manner of Sophocles, but in the part of Electra he rose above Sophocles himself, and also in the way he preserved the character of Clytemnestra from harshness and indecency. But in the fifth act, when the catastrophe occurs, he had not softened the horror of the parricide enough; and the Crébillon faction being anything but gentle, all that could give rise to criticism was shown up by their murmurs, or turned into derision. The performance was disturbed at every moment; and this play, which has since been rightly applauded, had to endure hisses. I was in the amphitheatre—more dead than alive. Voltaire came to me, and once when the pit ridiculed a touch of pathos, he rose and cried: " Eh, barbarians, that is Sophocles!"

Finally he gave " Rome Sauvée "; and in the persons of Cicero, Cæsar and Cato, he avenged the dignity of the Roman senate, which Crébillon had degraded in subordinating all the great characters to that of Catalina. I remember that, having just written the fine scenes of Cicero and Cæsar with Catalina, he read them to me with a perfection no actor has ever approached; simply, nobly, without any affectation, better than I had ever heard him read. " Ah ! your mind can be at peace over these lines; you will be right not to retouch them. You have never written anything more beautiful." This play had a great success of esteem in the opinion of well-informed people; but it was not what would touch the multitude; the eloquence of style, the merit of having noted the customs and described the characters with such erudition, was not felt by the great mass of the public. Thus, with these prodigious advantages over his rival, Voltaire had the distress of seeing his triumph disputed, indeed, refused.

These mortifications decided his journey to Prussia. One difficulty only retarded it, and the manner of its removal was strange enough to amuse you for a moment. The difficulty was—the travelling expenses, about which Frederic was rather reluctant. He was quite willing to defray Voltaire's, and consented to give him a thousand louis; but Madame Denis wanted to accompany her uncle, and for this additional expense Voltaire demanded another thousand louis, to which the King of Prussia would not agree at all. "I shall be very pleased if Madame Denis comes with you, but I do not ask it," he wrote. "Look at it!" said Voltaire to me, "such niggardliness in a King! He has barrels of gold, and doesn't want to give me a thousand miserable louis for the pleasure of seeing Madame Denis at Berlin! He will give them, or I won't go myself!" A comic incident ended this dispute. One morning as I went to see him I found his friend Thiriot in the garden of the Palais Royal and as he was on the look-out for literary news, I asked him if he had any. "Yes, there is something really new, and very curious it is," he said; "you are going to M. Voltaire, and you will hear it there; for I am going there as soon as I have had my coffee."

Voltaire was working quietly in bed when I arrived. In his turn he asked: "What news is there?" "I don't know any at all, but Thiriot, whom I met in the Palais Royal, has some very interesting news to tell you, he says. He is just coming." "Well, Thiriot," he said to him, "so you have some very strange news for us?" "Oh, very strange, and something that will please you," answered Thiriot, with his sardonic smile and nasal twang. "Well, what have you got to tell us?" "I've got to tell that Arnaud Baculard has arrived at Potsdam, and that the King of Prussia has received him with open arms." "With open arms!" "That Arnaud has presented him with an epistle." "Very turgid and very clumsy!" "Not at all, extremely beautiful; so beautiful that the King has replied with another epistle." "The King of Prussia an epistle to Arnaud! Nonsense, Thiriot, nonsense;

you are making fun of us !" "I don't know if anyone is making fun of you, but I have both epiſtles in my pocket." "Come, give them to me quickly, that I may read these two maſterpieces. What dullness ! What platitudes ! What vulgarity !" he said, reading Arnaud's epiſtle; then going on to the King's, he read it in silence and with a pitying air; but when he came to these lines,

Voltaire eſt a son couchant,
Vous êtes à votre aurore ;

he gave a ſtart and bounded from his bed, leaping with fury: "Voltaire is at his setting and Baculard at his dawning ! and it's a king who writes this atrocious ſtupidity ! Let him go and busy himself with his governing !"

We had great difficulty, Thiriot and I, in not burſting into laughter at seeing Voltaire in his shirt, skipping about with rage and apoſtrophising the King of Prussia. "I will go," he said; "yes, I will go and teach him how to be a judge of men." And from that moment his journey was decided. I have a suspicion that the King of Prussia wanted to give him a touch of the spur, for without that I doubt whether he would have left, so piqued was he at the refusal of the thousand louis, not out of avarice at all, but in vexation at not getting what he wanted.

Excessively headſtrong by nature and by principle, he had even in those little things an unbelievable reluctance to yield, and give up what he had resolved to do. Before his departure I witnessed a ſtrange enough example of this. He fancied that he would like to have a hunting-knife on his journey, and one morning, when I was with him, a bundle of them was brought to him to choose from. He chose one, but the dealer wanted a louis for his hunting-knife, and Voltaire had taken it into his head to give only eighteen francs for it. Behold him calculating in detail that that was what it was worth: he added that the dealer had the face of an honeſt man and, with that sign of good faith on his brow, he would confess that eighteen francs was a good price for the weapon. The merchant accepted the praise he was pleased to give his face, but answered that, as an honeſt man, he had only one price; that he asked only juſt what the thing was worth, and in letting it go at a lower price he would wrong his children. "You have children?" asked Voltaire. "Yes, monsieur. I have five, three boys and two girls, of whom the youngeſt is twelve years old." "Well, we will consider placing the boys and marrying the girls. I have friends in business, I have influence at the offices. But let us finish this little affair: here are eighteen francs; don't let's speak of it any more." The good merchant was loſt in thanks for the protection with which Voltaire wished to honour him; but he kept to his firſt word about the price of the hunting-knife, and would not lower it by one farthing. I will cut short the scene, which laſted for a quarter of an hour through the wiles of eloquence and seduction Voltaire vainly used—not to save six francs, which he would have given to some poor person, but to give to his will the power of persuasion. He had to yield in the end; and with an aſtounded, disconcerted and vexed air, he threw the crown on the table as if it hurt him so to let go. The dealer, as soon as he had got his account, thanked him for his favours and kindness and went.

"I am very glad," I said in a low voice, seeing him depart. "Of what?" asked Voltaire, sulkily. "What are you glad about?" "That the family of this honeſt man has nothing to complain of. Soon his sons will have positions and his daughters will be married; and he, meanwhile, has sold his hunting-knife for what he wanted, and you have paid him, in spite of all your eloquence." "And so that's why you're glad, you stubborn creature from Limousin?" "Oh yes, I am very pleased. If he had given in to you I think I would have struck him." "Do you know," he said, laughing in his sleeve after a moment's silence, "that had Molière witnessed such a scene, he would have profited by it." "Surely—it would have been the fellow to the one with M. Dimanche," I answered. In this way his anger, or rather his impatience, always ended, with me, in gentleness and friendship.

As I guessed the King of Prussia's secret, and thought I was also in the secret of the little sincerity there was in his favours, I had a presentiment of their mutual dissatisfaction. So imperious a soul and so ardent a mind could hardly ever be compatible, and I hoped to see Voltaire return soon, more displeased with Germany than with his own country; but the fresh mortification he suffered on taking leave of the King, and the anger he felt at it, left me no more comforting illusions. As a gentleman-in-ordinary of the King's bedchamber, he thought he might venture to ask his commands with regard to the King of Prussia, but the King's only answer was to turn his back on him brusquely; and as soon as he was out of the kingdom, Voltaire sent back, in his vexation, the brevet of historiographer of France, and accepted, without his consent, the cross of the Order of Merit with which the King of Prussia decorated him, only to deprive him of it a short time after.

The example of so much bitterness and trouble spread over the life of this great man only made me dread all the more the career of letters in which I was engaged, and think the obscure quiet I was going to enjoy at Versailles much sweeter.

Here finishes, thank heaven, the wildness of my youth; here begins for me the course of a life less dissipated—wiser, more equable, and, above all, less exposed to storms of passion; here, at last, my character—too long inconstant and varied—acquires some consistency; and on a solid foundation my judgment can, in silence, work out my rule of conduct.

FIFTH BOOK

AT Marly I had only one amusement: that was the strange sight of the gaming in the salon. There I would see, round a table of lansquenet, the torment of the passions repressed through deference; the avid thirst for gold, hope, fear, anguish of loss, and fervour of gain: joy after a full hand, despair after a cut-throat alternated rapidly in the hearts of the players, beneath the immobile mask of cold tranquillity.

My life was less solitary and not so wise at Fontainebleau. The suppers of the Menus-Plaisirs, the King's hunting, the theatre performances were frequent dissipations, and I had not, I must confess, the courage to deny myself.

At Versailles I had also my amusements, but regulated according to my plan of study and work, so that they should always be relaxations only. My daily society was that of the chief clerks, nearly all amiable people, and vying with each other in good cheer. In the intervals of their work they gave themselves up to the pleasures of the table: they were gluttons for about the same reason as are the devout. The Abbé de la Ville, for instance, was the most careful man in the world to procure fine wines for himself. Each year his major-domo went to collect the unbottled wine of the best cellars in Burgundy, and kept his casks in sight. I used to go to his dinners, and made quite a good figure at them.

The chief clerk of the war office, Dubois, was the one who had the most unreserved friendship for me; we were intimate to the point of thee-ing and thou-ing. There was no service he would not have rendered me, if I had given him the chance; but I, for my part, thought only of making life pass pleasantly; and if I gained any advantage from the society of the chief clerks it was without having thought about it, and of their own initiative. You will hear an example.

Of these laborious sybarites, the liveliest, the most fascinating, the most devoted to pleasure, and with the frailest health, was precisely Cromot, who has since been so brilliant under so many ministers. The ease, the pleasing quality, the quickness of his work, and above all his dexterity, captivated them in spite of themselves.

When I knew him he was the personal and favoured secretary of M. de Machault. It was a relationship that many people would have envied, but its agreeableness was the only value it had for me. At this same time, chance, mixing in my affairs unknown to me, made me meet at Versailles the mistress of Bouret, the tax farmer, who held the portfolio of Appointments—an acquaintance no less useful. This woman, who soon became my friend, and remained so to her last breath, was the witty and lovable Madame Filleul. She was detained at supper at Versailles, and I was invited to sup with her: I was about to withdraw, saying that I had to go to Paris. She at once offered to take me there, and I accepted a place in her carriage. The acquaintanceship made, she spoke of me to her friend Bouret, and apparently made him want to know me. Thus circumstances arranged themselves most favourably for my dearest wish.

My elder sister was of a marriageable age; and although I had only a small dowry to give her, there were several suitable matches for her at my home. I preferred the man whose morals and attainments were known to me as first in merit; and my choice proved to be the same as my sister's would have been had she followed her inclination. Odde, my school-fellow, had been a model of piety, wisdom and studiousness ever since. His character was gentle and gay, full of candour and perfectly equable: of incorruptible integrity, and always true to himself. He still lives, he is about my own age, and I don't think there is a purer soul in the world. For him there has only been a change from the age of innocence to the age of virtue. His father, dying, had left him little wealth, but a rare and precious friend as heritage. This friend, whom M. Turgot has often praised to me, was a M. de Malesaigne, a true philosopher, who, in our isolated town, almost solitary, spent his life in reading Tacitus, Plutarch, Montaigne, in taking care of his estate and cultivating his garden. "Who would believe," M. Turgot said to me, "that such a man would be hidden in a little Limousin town? I have never seen anyone better informed or wiser on the subject of government." It was this worthy friend of M. Odde who, acting in his behalf, asked me for my sister's hand; I was flattered by it: but in the letter I thought I noticed a hope that Odde would get some position through my influence. I answered that I would do all that was possible, but that my influence, not being such as they believed in my province, I was not sure of anything myself, and that I could promise nothing. M. de Malesaigne replied that my sincerity was worth more than light promises, and the marriage was settled.

It was a month afterwards that, Bouret coming to work with the Minister of Finance to fill vacant posts, I dined with him at his friend Cromot's. It would have been difficult to collect two men of sharper or quicker natural wit, or more fertile in ingenious turns, than those two. In Cromot, however, there was more freedom, more habitual grace and facility; in Bouret more fervour in his desire to please, and more felicity in appositeness. Both were so gay at this dinner that

I was soon in the same spirit myself, but, on rising from the table, Bouret unfolded a long liſt of aspirants to the vacant poſts, and their recommenders. These supporters were all important people. It was the duke of this, the marquis of that, princes of the blood, the royal family; in a word, all the town and the court. "Where am I, then?" I cried. "I, who in marrying my siſter to a soundly trained young man, skilful in business, full of wit and sense, and an honeſt man to boot, have given him as a dowry the hope of gaining him a position by my poor credit? I will write to him not to hope for it." "Why," said Bouret, "why do your siſter the bad turn of making her husband miserable? Sad love is very cold: leave them their hope; it is something good, till better comes."

They left me to go and work with the miniſter; and when I had retired to my rooms, a messenger from the office came from them to ask for my brother-in-law's names. That very evening he had a position. I need not tell you how rapturous my gratitude was the next day. This was the date of the beginning of a long friendship between Bouret and me. I will speak of it again at leisure.

However, I considered that the position given to M. Odde was both too obscure and too inactive for a man of his talent. I exchanged it for a position more difficult and worth less money, so that by making himself known he could contribute to his advancement. His deſtination was Saumur. On his way there, his wife and he came to see me in Paris; and I cannot express the joy that filled her as she embraced me. I had them with me for several days. My friends were kind enough to give them a welcome that touched me. During the dinners given for them it was a moving sight to see my siſter's eyes continually fixed on me, without being able to satiate themselves with looking. It was not siſterly love, but the love of a daughter.

Hardly arrived at Saumur, she made friends with a relative of Madame de Pompadour's, whose husband had a position in the town worth two thousand crowns. This position was the salt store. This young man, called M. de Blois, was stricken by the illness of which my father, my mother and brother had died. We knew too well that it was incurable; and Madame de Blois did not conceal from my sister that her husband had only a short while to live. "For me, my dear friend," she said to her, "it will be at least some consolation if his business passes to M. Odde. Madame de Pompadour disposes of it; persuade your brother to ask her for it for you." My sister gave me this information and I profited by it: the business was promised to me. But, on M. de Blois' death, Madame de Pompadour's steward announced that she had just granted this same business as a dowry to one of her protégés. Struck as if by an axe, I went to her house; and, as she passed me to go to mass, I asked her, with respectful confidence, for the position she had promised me for my sister's husband. "I forgot you," she said, hurrying along, "and I have given it to someone else, but I will make amends." I awaited her return, and asked her for a moment's audience. She allowed me to follow her. "Madame, it is no longer a position or money I ask of you; I implore you to leave me my honour; for in taking that from me, you would give me a death-blow." This opening astonished her, and I continued: "As sure of the place you had promised as if I already had it, I announced it to my brother-in-law. In Saumur he has said that I had your word for it; he has written it to his family and mine; two provinces have been told about it; I myself have boasted of it in Versailles and Paris, speaking of your kindnesses. Now, madame, no one will believe that you would have granted to another a place you had formally promised to me.

It is known that you have a thousand ways of doing good to whomsoever you will. So it will be me who will be accused of boasting, of insincerity and of lying: and behold me dishonoured. Madame, I have known how to vanquish adversity, I have lived in poverty, but I do not know how to live in shame and the contempt of honest people. You are kind enough to want to make amends to my brother-in-law, but I, having appeared as an impudent liar, can you give me back, madame, the reputation of an honest man, the only one of which I am jealous? Will your kindness efface the stain on my reputation? Recompense, madame, these other protégés for the position that a moment's forgetfulness made you promise them: it will be very easy for you to procure them a better one: but do not do me an irreparable wrong, and reduce me to the depths of despair." She wanted to persuade me to wait, and that my sister would lose nothing by it; but I persisted in saying that it was the position in Saumur that I had boasted of having, and that I did not want any other, were it a hundred times better. At these words I retired and the place was granted me.

I had, as can be seen, and as will be seen again, facilities for making my own fortune that might have excited my ambition; but having provided for the well-being of my family, I was so well satisfied, so peaceful, that I desired nothing more.

My most intimate and habitual circle in Versailles was that of Madame de Chalut, an excellent woman of no great wit but much sense, and of an inestimable gentleness, calmness and sincerity of character.

After having been lady of the bedchamber to the first wife of the Dauphin, she had passed on to the second, by whom she was even more loved. This princess had no more faithful, tender or sincere friend, or, rather, this was the only true friend she had in France. Therefore, down to its most secret thoughts, she opened her heart to her, and in the most delicate and difficult circumstances she was her only adviser, consolation and support. These feelings of respect, trust and friendship had been communicated from his wife's heart to that of the Dauphin. Both of them had made up their minds to sell their most precious jewels in order to marry and dower richly Mademoiselle Varanchan (that was her maiden name) if the Comptroller-General had not stopped them by obtaining from the King a *Fermier-General's* place for the man she was going to marry. That shows clearly how highly her lord and lady prized her; and I may add that there was nothing she would not have done for me; I have been her friend for twenty years and have not asked her for anything. I had formed such a noble and pure idea of friendship, in my heart the feeling was so generous, that I would have thought it a profanation and disgrace to mingle any ambitious aims with it; and in as much as Madame de Chalut would have been prodigal of her help, so much more did I think it becoming for me to be discreet and disinterested. I continually seized opportunities to pay my court to the Dauphin and his wife, but only to please her; and if I sometimes wrote verses for them, no one but she inspired them. On this subject I remember a rather strange scene.

After her marriage, Madame de Chalut still continued in the service of the Dauphine; she was even more diligent in her attendance. The princess loved her so much that she sorrowed in her absence. So that she always kept a house in Versailles; and every time I went there before being settled in, this house was my own. After his smallpox, the convalescence of the Dauphin was celebrated by a fête there, and I was invited. I found Madame de Chalut radiant with joy and rapturous with admiration over the conduct of her mistress, who night and day at her husband's bedside, had taken the tenderest care of him during his illness. The vivid account she gave of it went through me. I wrote some verses on this moving subject: the interest of the picture made the success of the painter, and these verses had at court at least the favour of the moment, the merit of appropriateness. Whilst reading them the prince and princess were moved to tears. Madame de Chalut was asked to tell me how much the reading had affected them, and that they would be very happy to see me in order to testify it themselves. "Go there," she said to me, "to-morrow when they dine; you will be pleased with the welcome they propose to give you." I did not fail to go. There were few people there. I was placed opposite them, two paces from the table, very alone and conspicuous. On seeing me, they whispered to each other, then looked at me, and then whispered again. I saw they were occupied with me, but both in turn seemed to let the words they wished to say to me die on their lips. Thus the dinner-time passed until the moment when I had to depart like everyone else. Madame de Chalut had waited on them at table, and you can guess how impatient this long, tongue-tied scene had made her. I was going to dine at her house, and we ought to have rejoiced together over the reception they had given me. I went to wait for her, and when she arrived: "Well, madame, ought I not to be very flattered by all the kind and charming things that were said to me?" "Do you know how they spent their dinner?" she answered. "In asking each other to speak to you, and neither had the courage." "I did not think I was the imposing person I am: and certainly I ought to be proud of the respect with which I impress M. le Dauphin and Madame la Dauphine." And the contrast seemed so funny to us that we laughed heartily, and I considered as said all that they had intended to say.

But the good-will towards me in this court served, however, to make me heard and believed in an interesting affair. The certificate of baptism of Aurore, daughter of Mademoiselle Verrière, attested that she was the daughter of the Maréchal de Saxe; and, after the death of her father, Madame la Dauphine had the intention of seeing to her education. This was her mother's ambition; but it came into the Dauphin's head to say that she was my daughter, and these words made an impression. Madame de Chalut told me laughingly; but I took this joke of the Dauphin's most seriously: I accused him of frivolity; and, offering to prove that I had only known Mademoiselle Verrière during the Maréchal's journey in Prussia, more than a year after the birth of this child, said that it was inhuman to take her real father from her by making him appear to be me. Madame de Chalut undertook to plead this cause to Madame la Dauphine, and M. le Dauphin yielded. So Aurore was educated at their expense at the convent at Saint Cloud; and Madame de Chalut, who had her country house at Saint Cloud, kindly took on herself, for my sake and because of my entreaty, the care and detail of this education.

There are two other especial connections to be mentioned that I had at Versailles: one of simple convenience, with Quesnay, Madame de Pompadour's doctor; the other with Madame de Marchais and her intimate friend, Comte d'Angevilliers, a young man of very great qualities. As regards her it was very soon a bond of affection, and, for the forty years it has lasted, I can quote it as an example of a friendship that neither years nor events have made falter or swerve. We will begin with Quesnay, as it is the less interesting. Quesnay, lodged very sparingly as to room in the entresol of Madame de Pompadour, busied himself only, from morning until night, with political and rural economy. He believed he had reduced it to a system of calculations and axioms of irresistible validity, and, as he was founding a school, he willingly gave himself the trouble to explain his new doctrine to me, in order to make me a scholar and proselyte. I, who thought of making him a mediator with Madame de Pompadour, applied all my understanding to comprehend the truths which he told me were evident, and in which I saw only vagueness and obscurity. To make him believe that I understood what in fact I did not understand was beyond my strength; but I listened to him with patient docility, and allowed him the hope of finally enlightening me and inculcating his doctrine: that was enough to gain me his good-will. I did more; I applauded a work that I did in fact think estimable; for he aimed at making agriculture commendable in a country where it was too much despised, and to turn a host of minds to this study. I had even a chance to flatter him in this soft spot, and it was he who gave it me.

An Irishman, called Patulo, having written a book explaining the advantages of English agriculture over ours, had, through Quesnay, got permission from Madame de Pompadour to dedicate it to her; but he had written his dedicatory epistle badly. Madame de Pompadour, after reading it, told him to come to me and beg me for her sake to retouch it with care. I found it easier to write him another; and in speaking of the farmers in it I attached such a moving anxiety to their state that Madame de Pompadour, at the reading of this letter, had tears in her eyes. Quesnay noticed this, and I cannot tell you how pleased he was with me. His way of being useful to me with the Marquise was to let fall words here and there, seemingly without thought, but which, however, left an impression.

With regard to his character, I remember one trait which will explain it fairly well. He had been put there by the old Duc de Villeroi and by a Comtesse d'Estrades, a friend and crony of Madame d'Etioles, who, not knowing she nourished a serpent in her bosom, had taken her out of misery and brought her to the court. So Quesnay was attached to Madame d'Estrades through gratitude, when this intriguing woman abandoned her benefactress to give herself to Comte d'Argenson, and to conspire with him against her. It is difficult to conceive how such a wretched woman in every sense had, in spite of her ugliness of face and soul, seduced a man of the character, mind and age of M. d'Argenson; but, in his eyes, she had the merit of having sacrificed for him someone to whom she owed everything, and to become, for love of him, the most thankless of creatures.

However, Quesnay, without concerning himself with these conflicting passions, was on one hand the incorruptible servant of Madame de Pompadour, and on the other constant and grateful to Madame d'Estrades, who answered for him to M. d'Argenson; and although he went quite openly to see them sometimes, Madame de Pompadour had no uneasiness. On their side they had as much trust in him as if he had no connection with Madame de Pompadour.

Now this is what M. d'Argenson told Dubois after his exile. Dubois had been his secretary, and it is he who speaks—his tale is in my mind now—and you must imagine you hear him.

"To supplant Madame de Pompadour, M. d'Argenson and Madame d'Estrades inspired the King with a desire for the favours of the young and beautiful Madame de Choiseul, wife of the Dauphin's gentleman. The intrigue progressed: was at the deciding point. The rendezvous arranged, the young lady there—she was there at the very moment that M.

d'Argenson, Madame d'Estrades, Quesnay and I were together in the minister's cabinet: we two were silent witnesses, but M. d'Argenson and Madame d'Estrades were very distracted and uneasy about what might be happening. After rather a long wait Madame de Choiseul arrives, dishevelled and in disorder—the signs of her triumph! Madame d'Estrades runs to her with open arms and asks 'if it is done?' 'Yes, it is done,' she answered; 'I am loved and he is happy; she will be dismissed; he has given me his word.' At these words there were many exclamations of joy. Quesnay alone was unmoved. 'Doctor,' M. d'Argenson said to him, 'nothing is altered for you, and we hope very much you will stay.' 'I, Monsieur le Comte!' answered Quesnay coldly, rising, 'I have been attached to Madame de Pompadour in her prosperity and shall be so in her disgrace,' and he left immediately. We were paralysed, but not one of us felt any mistrust. 'I know him so well,' said Madame d'Estrades; 'he is not the man to betray us.' And as a matter of fact, it was not by him that the secret was discovered, and that the Marquise de Pompadour was saved from her rival." Such is Dubois' tale.

Whilst these storms rose and fell above Quesnay's mezzanine, he scribbled his axioms and calculations on rural management, as tranquil, as indifferent to these movements of the court as if he had been a hundred miles away. There they deliberated on peace and war, on the choice of generals, or the dismissal of ministers; and we in the entresol argued about agriculture, calculated net profits—or sometimes dined merrily with Diderot, d'Alembert, Duclos, Helvétius, Turgot, and Buffon—and Madame de Pompadour, not being able to persuade this band of philosophers to descend to her salon, came herself to see them at table and to talk with them.

The other acquaintanceship of which I have spoken was infinitely dearer to me. Madame de Marchais was not only, to my delight, the cleverest and most lovable of women, but the best and truest friend, the most active and constant, the most keenly interested in all that affected me. Imagine all the charms of character, mind and language united in the highest degree, and these expressed in her face. She was not pretty, but had in her manner a grace full of attraction: such was this fair elf. Her mind, active beyond all telling, gave to her face a dazzling and bewitching variability. Not one feature was such as a painter would choose, but the whole had a charm that no pencil could render. Her figure in its daintiness was beautifully shaped, and her carriage gave an impressive nobility to her whole person. Add to this an exquisite culture, diversified and extending from the lightest and most brilliant literature to the highest conceptions of genius: her ideas had a surprising clarity, subtlety and rightness; she had an easy and happy choice of expression, flowing naturally and keeping pace with her thought; add an excellent mind, inexhaustible goodness, and an at all hours unwearied helpfulness, gentle, obliging and flattering. Her lover, M. d'Angevilliers, was strangely interesting, for the reason that, having everything that could make him loved and happy—a beautiful face, a cultivated mind, fondness for literature and the arts, a fine soul and pure heart, the King's esteem, the Dauphin's confidence and intimacy, and, at court, a reputation and importance rarely acquired so young—he was always, or at least appeared to be, inwardly unhappy. Inseparable from Madame de Marchais, but sad and inhibited before her—serious when she was gay, timid and shaking at her voice—he, whose character had pride and energy and force, was troubled when she spoke to him, looked at her with an air of suffering, and answered her in a feeble, hesitating, almost inaudible voice; then so changed in her absence, displaying his fine presence, speaking well and with fire, giving himself with all the freedom of his wit and mind to the pleasure of society. He was like a harshly treated and despotically ruled lover. However, their lives were most intimately united, and obviously he was the man preferred above all others. Had this appearance of being an unhappy swain only lasted a short time, one would have thought it assumed, but it had been the same for fifteen successive years, and continued after M. de Marchais' death as in his life, up to the moment when his widow married M. d'Angevilliers; then everything altered; command was taken over by the husband, and the wife was all deference and desire to please, with a submissive air of respect. I have never in my life seen anything so queer in manners as this sudden voluntary alteration which led to a most happy life for both of them.

They were always perfectly agreed in their regard for me, and are so yet; my feeling for them will never change.

Amongst my recreations I haven't counted the theatre, which I had every facility for enjoying at the court performances, but I went rarely, and only speak of it here to note an interesting revolution in the art of declamation.

For a long time I had had a regular dispute with Mademoiselle Clairon over the way tragic verse should be declaimed. I thought her acting had too much noise and fury—was not supple and varied enough, and above all had a force which, if not moderated, would hold more passion than tenderness. This is what I tried tactfully to make her understand. I said to her: "You have every talent for excelling in your art, and, great actress as you are, you could easily be even greater if you used your many gifts to more advantage. You plead your dazzling successes and the approbation and high opinion of your friends: you plead Voltaire's authority, who himself recites verse pompously, claiming that tragic verse needs the same loftiness in declamation as in style; but I—I can only plead an irresistible feeling that declamation, and style too, can be noble, majestic and tragic with simplicity; that expression to be real and profoundly moving must have gradation, nuance, unlooked-for and sudden touches which it cannot have when it is tense and strained." Sometimes she would say to me impatiently that I wouldn't leave her alone until she adopted a familiar and comic tone in tragedy. "Ah, no, mademoiselle," I said, "that you could never have; nature has forbidden it—you don't use it now with me; the sound of your voice, your face, pronunciation, gestures and attitudes are all noble. Dare only to trust to your fine natural gifts, I will guarantee that you will be more tragic." Other counsels than mine prevailed, and I gave in—tired of being troublesome to no purpose—when suddenly the actress herself came round to my way of thinking. She was going to play Roxane at the little theatre of Versailles. I went to see her in her dressing-room, and for the first time found her dressed as a Sultana, without paniers, her arms half bare—in authentic Eastern costume. I complimented her. "You will be pleased with me," she said. "I have just come back from a tour to Bordeaux; there I found only a very small hall, and had to adapt myself to it. It came into my head to moderate my acting, to attempt the simple declamation you have so often asked me to try. It had the greatest success. I am going to try it in this little theatre. Go and hear me. If it succeeds here equally —good-bye to the old declamation!"

The event passed her expectations and mine. It was no longer the actress that one saw and heard, but Roxane herself. The astonishment, illusion and delight were extreme. People said: "Where are we? Never have we seen anything like this!" I saw her after the performance and wanted to speak of her triumph. "Oh, don't you see," she said to me "how that this will ruin me! For all my parts I must have the right costume; realism in speech exacts realistic clothes. My splendid wardrobe has got to be made over, and I lose ten thousand crowns' worth of dresses! But the sacrifice is made. In eight days you will see me play Electra in the flesh as you have seen Roxane."

It was the "Electra" of Crébillon. Instead of the ridiculous hoop-petticoat and wide mourning robe that we were used to seeing in this part she appeared in the simple dress of a slave, with dishevelled hair and arms weighted with long chains. She was wonderful, but a little while after she was yet more sublime in the "Electra" of Voltaire. This rôle, which Voltaire had made her recite as an eternal, monotonous lament, spoken more naturally, acquired a beauty unknown even to him, for when he heard her play it at his theatre at Ferney, where she had gone to see him, he cried, in tears and carried away by his admiration: "It isn't I who have done this! It is her creation!" And truly, by the infinite nuance she put into it and the expression of the passions which fill this rôle, it was perhaps the most amazing feat of all her acting.

Paris as well as Versailles recognised in these changes the real tragic accent, and the new degree of truth given to theatrical action by this study of costume. So, immediately, all the actors had to give up their *tonnelets*,[1] fringed gloves, voluminous wigs and plumed hats—all the fantastic accoutrements that had offended people of taste for so long. Le Kain, too, followed Mademoiselle Clairon's example, and from that moment they strove to excel in perfecting their talents, and were worthy rivals of each other.

---

[1] Skirts worn by actors.

You can easily imagine that a due admixture of peaceful occupations and varied amusements more than recompensed me for the charms of Paris, but as an added pleasure I was free to go there whenever I wished and my duties gave me time. M. de Marigny himself, solicited by my old friends, asked me to go and see them. I always noticed in his conduct with me a peculiarity which a prouder person might not have been able to endure, but which a little philosophy made me understand. Away from his home he was the man of the world who most enjoyed being with me; at dinner or supper with our mutual friends he was more pleased than I by the friendship and esteem shown me—he was flattered and grateful for it. It was he who took me to Madame Geoffrin, and for his sake I was invited to the dinners given to artists as well as writers; finally, when I ceased to be secretary to the Crown buildings—as you will see later—no one showed greater eagerness to have me as companion and friend. Well ! as long as I was under his orders in this secretaryship, not once did he ask me to dine with him at his own house. Ministers do not eat with their clerks, and he adopted this formality; had he made an exception in my favour the whole staff would have been discontented and jealous. He never explained this to me, but you will have just seen that he was good enough to let me understand it in other ways.

The years I spent at Versailles were those when the spirit of philosophy was most active. D'Alembert and Diderot had raised its standard in the huge workroom of the Encyclopedia, and all that was most distinguished amongst men of letters rallied round them. Voltaire, back from Berlin, where he had driven away the unfortunate Arnaud, and had not been able to remain himself, had retired to Geneva, and from there breathed that spirit of liberty, innovation and independence which has since made such progress. In his ill-humour with the King he had been imprudent, but in obliging him to remain in a free country when he wanted to return to his own land, they had rendered him a greater service. The King's answer, "Let him stay where he is," was ill-considered. Voltaire's attacks could not be stopped at the frontier. They should have exiled him to Versailles, where he would have been less daring than in Switzerland or Geneva. The priests ought to have opened this magnificent prison for him, which Cardinal Richelieu gave to the aristocracy. In retaining his title as gentleman-in-ordinary to the King's chamber, he himself held out the chain that could have bound him had they wished. I must in justification to Madame de Pompadour say, that it was in opposition to her that he was exiled. She was concerned about him, and several times asked me for news, and when I answered that it only rested with her to have him nearer, she replied, sighing: "Ah no, it does not depend on me!" Therefore it was from Geneva that Voltaire inspired the fellow-labourers of the Encyclopedia. I was one of them, and my greatest pleasure when I went to Paris was to foregather with them. D'Alembert and Diderot were satisfied with my work, and our relations bound us closer in a friendship that endured as long as they lived—more intimate and tender, more assiduously cultivated with D'Alembert, but as true and unalterable with Diderot, whom I was always so delighted to see and charmed to hear.

Eventually, I must admit, I felt the distance from Paris to Versailles put too great an interval between the happy moments spent in the company of men of letters. Those I loved and honoured most were kind enough to say that we were made for each other.

They put the Académie Française before me as a goal; therefore at times a desire to recommence a literary career rose in me, but above all I wanted a free and sure existence, which Madame de Pompadour and her brother would have been very pleased to procure for me—here is a sensible proof thereof.

In 1757, after the attempt made on the King's life, and the big upheaval of the ministry when M. d'Argenson and M. de Machault were dismissed on the same day, M. Rouillé obtained the superintendence of posts, of which the secretaryship, held by old Moncrif, had net grant of a salary of two thousand crowns. I thought of asking for its reversion, persuaded that M. Rouillé, new to his position, would not refuse Madame de Pompadour the first thing she asked him. So I begged her, through Dr. Quesnay, to grant me an audience. It was fixed for the evening of the following day, and all night long I dreamed of what I had to say to her. My head burned, and loosing sight of my object, there I was preoccupied with the evils of the State, and resolved to use my audience to make known some beneficial truths. The hours of sleep were employed in meditating my address, the morning in writing it—to have it more in my mind. In the evening I went to Quesnay at the designated hour and had myself announced. Quesnay, occupied in tracing the zigzag of net products, did not even ask me what I was going to do at Madame de Pompadour's. She sent for me; I descended, and entering her room, I began: "Madame, M. Rouillé has just obtained the directorship of posts; the secretaryship of the letter-post depends on him. Moncrif, who has it, is very old; would it be asking too much to beg you to get me the reversion? Nothing would suit me better than this position, and my ambition would stop there for the rest of my life." She answered that she had promised the place to Darboulin (one of her intimates), but that she would make him give it up, if she could obtain it for me. After having thanked her, I said: "Madame, I am going to surprise you: the benefit I that have asked is not what occupies and interests me most at this moment; it is the state of the kingdom, the turmoil caused by this interminable quarrel between the parliament and the clergy, in which I see royal authority, like a vessel driven by the tempest between two rocks, and not a man in the Council capable of governing her!" To this amplified picture I added that of war, drawing out of the realm, on land and sea, all the strength of the State, and making so necessary calm and harmony within and the union of minds and agreement of wills. After which I began again: "As long as Messieurs D'Argenson and de Machault held office, one could attribute the internal dissensions with which the State is tormented to their disagreements, and also all those acts of harshness that were embittering instead of tranquillising; but now that these ministers are dismissed, the men replacing them have neither power nor influence; reflect, madame, that eyes are fixed on you, and that henceforth you will get reproaches and complaints if evil continues, or public gratitude if you find a remedy and stop it. In the name of your honour and peace, madame, hasten to bring this happy change. Don't wait until necessity compels, or someone else does it instead; you will lose your deserts, and only be accused of evil you have not committed. Every one who serves you has the same fear and hope." She replied that she had courage, and wished her friends to have it with her and for her; for the rest she was grateful for my zeal, but that I must be less uneasy, that they were working to get peace. She added that she would speak that very day to M. Rouillé, and told me to come to her the following morning.

"I have nothing good to tell you," she said, on seeing me again. "The succession to Moncrif has been given to someone else. It was the first thing that the new surintendant des postes asked the King, and he has obtained it for his former secretary. Think if there is any other thing I can do for you."

It was not easy to find a position that suited me as well as that one. However, I felt certain of receiving one from her in a short time, one that would please me even more, because I should have created it myself, and could therein leave traces of honourable work. This makes it necessary for me to introduce a personality that burned like a meteor, whose brilliance, although dimmed, has not yet been put out. If I only spoke of myself all would soon be said, but as the story of my life is a walk I am taking with my children, they must observe the passers-by with whom I have had social relationships.

L'Abbé de Bernis, a fugitive from the seminary of Saint Sulpice, where he had not been a success, was a charming poet—very chubby, very stout, very spruce—who, with the delightful Bernard, amused the gay suppers of Paris with his verses; Voltaire called him the flower-girl of Parnassus; more familiarly in society he was called Babet—the name of a pretty nosegay-seller of the time. It was from this, without any other merit, that he started and ended up a cardinal and French ambassador to the court of Rome. He had unavailingly solicited the old Bishop of Mirepoix (Boyer) for a pension from some abbey. This bishop, who took little account of pretty verse and who knew the life led by the abbé, answered harshly that as long as he (Boyer) were in power, he had nothing to hope for, to which the abbé replied: "Monseigneur, I will wait!" This mot flew round the town, and was very much liked. His property then consisted of a canonship of Brioude, which was worthless to him, as he was never there, and a bare little parsonage at Boulogne-sur-Mer, that he had obtained I don't know how. He was there when it was heard that, at the meet of the hunt at the forest of Senart, the King had paid much attention to the beautiful Madame d'Etioles. At once the abbé asked permission to pay his court to the young lady; the Comtesse d'Estrades, by whom he was known, obtained him this favour. He arrived at Etioles by the water barge, his little bundle under his arm. They made him recite his verses; he was amusing; he made every effort to be agreeable; and with the superficial wit and poetical polish which were his only talents he succeeded to such a point that he was admitted to the secret of the letters which the lovers exchanged. Nothing suited more the cast of his mind and style than this sort of service. So, as soon as the new mistress was installed at court, one of the first results of her favour was to get him a pension of a hundred louis from the privy purse, and a lodging at the Tuileries, which she furnished at her own expense. I saw him in this lodging under the palace roof, the most contented of men, with his pension and his furniture of imitation brocade. As he was a gentleman by birth, his protectress advised him to give up the chapter-house of Brioude for that of Lyons, and she obtained a fresh decoration for the new canon. At the same time he was the acknowledged lover of the lovely Princess de Rohan, which placed him in the great world as a man of quality; and suddenly he was nominated to the embassy of Venice; there he received the nephews of the Pope, Ganganelli, magnificently, and through that secured the favour of the Roman court. Recalled from Venice to become King's counsellor, he concluded, with Count Staremberg, the Treaty of Versailles; as a reward he received the post of the minister of Foreign Affairs, which M. de Rouillé ceded to him, and, shortly afterwards, the cardinal's hat, through the nomination of the Viennese court.

I saw him when he returned from his ambassadorship, and he treated me just as before his prosperity, with, however, a tinge of dignity that savoured a little of "his excellency"—and could anything be more natural!

After he had signed the Treaty of Versailles I congratulated him, and he showed that he would be pleased if I celebrated the advantages of this great and happy alliance in an epistle to the King. I answered that it would be easier and more gratifying to address it to him. He did not pretend not to be flattered. So I wrote this poem; it pleased him, and his friend, Madame de Pompadour, was charmed; she wished it to be printed and presented to the King, which was not at all displeasing to the negotiating abbé. I say nothing about his appointment to the embassies of Spain and Vienna, to which he did not go, having better to do at Versailles. Soon after he had need, on a pressing occasion, of a dependable man, someone discreet and diligent, who wrote a good style, and he did me the honour of coming to me; these are the circumstances. The King of Prussia, on entering Saxony with an army of sixty thousand men, had published a manifesto to which the Viennese court replied. This reply, translated into Teutonic French, had been sent to Fontainebleau, where the court was. It had to be presented to the King on the following Sunday, and Count Staremberg had five hundred copies to distribute on the same day. It was on the Wednesday evening that the Count Abbé de Bernis begged me to go and see him. He was closeted with Count Staremberg. They both showed me how upset they were to be compelled to publish a manifesto written so badly in our language, and told me what a very agreeable thing I would be doing for both the courts, of Vienna and Versailles, if I would correct it and have it hurriedly printed, to be ready for the public in four days. We read it together, and apart from the German expressions it was full of, I ventured to show them innumerable badly deduced reasonings, which were put obscurely. They gave me full authority to make all corrections; and after having arranged a meeting the next day at the same hour, I set to work. At the same time Abbé de Bernis wrote to M. de Marigny asking for the loan of me for the remainder of the week, having need of me for important work that I was willing to undertake.

I spent nearly the whole night and the following day in improving and copying this long manifesto, and at the prescribed hour I took it back to them, if not more elegantly, at least better, written. They praised my labour and diligence excessively. "But this isn't all," said the abbé; "this memorandum must be here, printed, in our hands on Sunday morning, in time for the King's levee; that is the termination of your work, my dear Marmontel." I answered: "Count, in half an hour I shall be ready to leave; order a post-chaise to fetch me, and with your own hand write two words to the lieutenant of police, so that the censorship does not retard the printing. I promise to be here on Sunday when you rise." I kept my word, but arrived worn out with fatigue and sleeplessness. Several days after he demanded the bill for the expenses of my journey and printing. I gave it to him very exactly, article for article, and he paid me the total precisely. And nothing more was said about it.

However, he never ceased to repeat that, for him, one of the advantages of the favour he enjoyed was the power to be useful to me. As he was then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I believed that if he could find means to employ me usefully for public work in his department, he would be disposed to do so, for his sake and mine. I based my project and hopes on these three grounds.

I knew that at that time the office of Foreign Affairs was in such chaos that even the most experienced clerks could hardly disentangle it. Thus, for a new minister, which he was, his position was a tedious schooling. Whilst speaking of Bernis himself I heard it said to Bussy, one of his oldest clerks: " That's the beginner they sent to the Abbé de la Ville and me!" and this beginner was the master that M. le Dauphin had chosen to teach him politics: a very strange choice for a prince who seemed to wish to be soundly instructed! Then the minister, the Dauphin, the King, and the State itself would be well served if I could bring order and light into this chaos of the past. This is what I proposed to the Abbé de Bernis in a clear and precise memorandum.

My project consisted first in disentangling and arranging the subjects of negotiations, according to their different connections, in their geographical place and their period. Afterwards, from epoch to epoch, commencing at a more or less distant date, I undertook to extract what was interesting from all these portfolios of dispatches and memoirs, and to form out of this an historical summary, large enough to be able to follow in it the progress of these negotiations, and observe the spirit of the different courts, the system of cabinets, the politics of the councils, the character of ministers, the Kings and their reigns; in one word, the springs which at such and such a time have moved Powers. Each year three volumes of this diplomatic treatise would be placed in the hands of the minister; and, written with care, it might perhaps be a convincing study for the Dauphin himself. Finally, to make things clearer, a book of tables in which one could see at a glance the respective negotiations in their proper relationship, and their simultaneous effect on European courts and governments. For this immense work I only asked for two clerks, a lodging at the office itself, and enough to live on frugally. The Abbé de Bernis seemed charmed with my scheme. "Give me this memorandum," he said, after hearing it read; "I feel its usefulness and value more than you. I wish to present it to the King." I had no doubt of its success, and I waited, but I waited in vain; and then, impatient to know its effect, I asked him for news. "Ah!" he said with an absent air, whilst getting into his chair to attend the council, "it all depends on a general arrangement about which nothing has yet been decided." This arrangement has since been made. The King had two houses built, one for the archives of the war department, the other for governmental. My plan has been carried out, at least, partially, and another than I has reaped the fruit: *sic vos non vobis!* After that answer of the Abbé de Bernis, I saw him once more: it was the day he was going to present himself to the King in his cardinal's robes, in a red cap and stockings, and a surplice ornamented with the richest English lace. I crossed his anterooms between two long lines of attendants in new scarlet clothes braided with gold. Entering his cabinet I found him glorious as a peacock, chubbier than ever, admiring himself untiringly in his splendour, especially his surplice and poppy-coloured stockings. "Am I not fine?" he asked. "Very fine; the cardinalate suits you marvellously, and I have come to wish you joy of it!" "And my livery, how do you like that?" "I thought it was the gilded throng come to congratulate you," I answered. These were the last words we exchanged.

I consoled myself easily for not owing anything to him, not only because I saw he was a coxcomb in purple, but because soon he was dishonest and ungrateful towards his benefactress—and nothing is so burdensome as to be indebted to unpleasant people.

Happier than he, I found consolation in study and work for the little hardships that I had to bear from fate; but as I was never very stoical I paid less patiently the tribute of pain that nature took for so many years. With habitually good and perfect health I was subject to very singular headaches. This illness is called the clavus: the seat of it is under the eyebrow. It is the throbbing of an artery, and each pulsation is a dagger-thrust that seems to pierce one to the core. I cannot describe the pain of it, and sharp and deep though it is, only one point is touched—just above the eye—the point of the pulse of this interior artery. I explain all this in order to make you understand an interesting phenomenon.

For the last seven years this headache came back to me at least once a year, and lasted from twelve to fifteen days, not continuously, but in paroxysms like a fever, and every day at the same hour, with little variation; it lasted about six hours, announcing itself by a tension in the veins and neighbouring nerves, and by a throbbing, not quicker, but stronger, in the artery where the pain is; at first it is hardly noticeable, but it grows and grows, diminishing gradually towards the end of the paroxysm, but for four hours at least it is at its height. What is astonishing is that, the fit over, there is not a trace of pain in the part, and neither for the rest of the day nor the following night, until the hour of the fresh paroxysm on the morrow, do I have any return of it. The doctors I have consulted tried unsuccessfully to cure me. Quinine, blood-letting from the foot, liquid applications, inhalations or sternutatives—all were useless; some of these remedies, such as quinine or nutmeg, only increased the pain.

One of the Queen's doctors, called Malouin, a clever enough man, but more of a Molière's Purgon than Purgon himself, thought of giving injections of an infusion of woundwort. Nothing happened; but at the end of its accustomed period the pain ceased; and behold Malouin exulting in such a good cure! I did not spoil his triumph, but he seized the opportunity to give me a lecture. "Well, my friend, will you henceforth believe in medicine and the knowledge of doctors?" I assured him that I believed in them very firmly. "No, you allow yourself sometimes to speak lightly of them, and that makes you appear foolish. Come, amongst scholars and men of letters, the most illustrious have always respected our art"; and he cited some great men. "Voltaire himself," he added, "who respects so little, has always spoken of doctors and medicine with esteem!" "Yes, doctor," I said to him, "but a certain Molière!" "Well!" he said, looking me fixedly in the eye and pressing my hand, "well, and how did he die?"

So for the seventh year I was in the grip of my illness when one day, just as the paroxysm was at its worst, Genson, Master of the Dauphin's Horse, came to see me. Genson contributed to the Encyclopedia very distinguished articles on subjects relative to his work. He had made a particular study of the comparative anatomy of man and horse; and no one was better informed, not only on the illnesses, but on the feeding and training of horses; but he had little practice in writing, and came to me to touch up his style. He came with his papers at a moment when I had endured agony for three hours. "Monsieur Genson," I said, "it is impossible for me to work with you to-day; I am in too great pain." He saw my right eye inflamed, and all the nerves of the temple and eyelid palpitating and quivering. He asked what was the matter, and I told him what I knew, and, after several queſtions on my conſtitution, my way of living and my usual health, he exclaimed: "Is it possible that they have let you suffer so long, when it is so easy to cure you?" "What!" I said with aſtonishment. "You know the remedy for it?" "Yes, I know it, and nothing is simpler. In three days you will be cured, and relieved by to-morrow." "How?" I asked, my hope being timid and weak. "When your ink is too thick and won't run, what do you do?" he said to me. "I put water in it." "Well, put water in your lymph; it will flow and not choke up the glands of the pituitary membrane, which actually irks the artery whose pulsations bruise the neighbouring nerve and cause you so much pain." "Is that really the cause of my sickness and the real cure?" "Moſt assuredly," he said. "You have in the bone there a small cavity called the frontal sinus; it is lined with a membrane that is a tissue of little glands; in its natural ſtate this membrane is as thin as an oak leaf. At this moment it is thick and obſtructed, and muſt be relieved; the means are easy and sure: dine wisely to-day, no ſtews, no undiluted wine or coffee or liqueurs, and inſtead of supper this evening drink as much clear fresh water as your ſtomach can ſtand without fatigue; drink the same to-morrow. Follow this régime for some days and I promise that to-morrow the attack will be slight, hardly noticeable the day after to-morrow, and the day after that there will be no pain at all." "Oh, Monsieur Genson, you will seem like a god to me if your promise comes true." It was truly fulfilled. Genson came to see me again, and as I told him I was cured whilſt embracing him, he said: "It is not enough to have cured you; now you muſt be saved from more pain. This part will be weak for some years, and until the membrane has regained its elasticity it is there that the thickened liquid will gather.

We must prevent these deposits. You have told me that the first symptom of your illness is a tension in the veins and nerves at the temple and eyelid. As soon as you feel this discomfort, drink water and follow the régime for at least a few days. The remedy of your sickness will be its preventative. However, this precaution will only be necessary for a few years. Once the organ is strengthened I ask nothing more of you." His injunctions were followed exactly, and obtained the complete success he had predicted.

This year, in which I got rid of such heavy suffering by virtue of a few glasses of water, was still more magical for me, in that just by a few chance words I benefited greatly a good man with whom I had absolutely no connection.

The court was at Fontainebleau, and quite often I went there to spend an hour of the evening with Quesnay. One evening, when I was with him, Madame de Pompadour sent for me and said: "Do you know that La Bruyère has died in Rome? He was the incumbent of the *Mercure* endowment; this endowment is a yearly income of twenty-five thousand livres, which is enough to make more than one person happy. We are thinking of attaching a new warrant to the *Mercure* for pensions for literary men. You know them; tell me the names of some who are in need of it and would be grateful." I mentioned Crébillon, d'Alembert, Boissy and others. I knew it was useless to recommend Crébillon, and seeing that she made a faint sign of disapprobation at the name of d'Alembert, I said: "Madame, he is a geometrician of the first order, a very distinguished writer and a very excellent man." "Yes," she answered, "but a hot-head." I replied gently that without warmth there was no great talent. "He is devoted to Italian music, and has put himself at the head of a group of jesters!" "Nevertheless he has written the preface to the Encyclopedia," I put in ſtill more modeſtly. She said no more, and he didn't get a pension. I believe that a deeper reason for his exclusion was his zeal for the King of Prussia, whose declared partisan he was, and whom Madame de Pompadour personally hated. When I came to Boissy, she asked: "Isn't Boissy rich? I thought he was at leaſt in easy circumſtances; I have seen him at the play, and always well dressed." "No, madame, he is poor, but he hides his poverty." "He has written so many plays," she ſtill insiſted. "Yes, but they have not all had the same success, and besides he muſt live. Liſten, madame; shall I tell you? Boissy is so unfortunate that if a friend had not discovered it, he would have died in misery laſt winter. Without food, too proud to ask it of anyone, he had shut himself up with his wife and son resolved to die together, and they were going to kill each other in one another's arms when this charitable friend broke open the door and saved them." "Oh, heavens!" cried Madame de Pompadour, "you make me shudder! I will recommend him to the King."

The next morning, I saw Boissy enter my room, pale and haggard, beside himself with an emotion that looked like joy coming on sorrow. His firſt movement was to fall at my feet; I thought he was ill, and rushed to help him, and raising him I asked what had put him into such a ſtate. "Oh, sir, don't you know? You, my generous benefactor: you, who have saved my life, through whom I have come out of an abyss of unhappiness into ease and unhoped-for prosperity! I had gone to ask for a moderate pension from the *Mercure*, and M. de Saint Florentin announced that it was the endowment itself that the King had granted me. He told me that I owed it to Madame de Pompadour. I went to thank her, and there M. Quesnay said that it was you who, in speaking of me, so touched Madame de Pompadour that her eyes were full of tears."

Here I interrupted by embracing him, but he continued: "What have I done, sir, to merit so moving an interest from you? I have only seen you momentarily, and you hardly know me—and you have the eloquence of feeling and friendship when speaking of me!" At these words he wanted to kiss my hands. "Oh, sir, this is too much," I said to him; "it is time I moderated this excess of gratitude. Now you have eased your heart I will explain in my turn. Assuredly I wished to serve you, but I was only being just, and without that would not have deserved the confidence Madame de Pompadour showed in consulting me. Her kindness and goodness have done the rest. So let me rejoice with you on your fortune, and let us both thank her to whom you owe it."

Directly Boissy had taken leave of me, I went to the minister, and seeing he received me as if he had nothing to tell me, I asked him if I had not to make a grateful acknowledgment to him. He said, No. I asked if all the pensions from the *Mercure* had been given. He said, Yes. If Madame de Pompadour had not spoken of me? He assured me that she had not said one word about me, and that, had she mentioned me, he would willingly have put me on the list he presented to the King. I admit I was perplexed, for although I had not named myself when she consulted me, I had felt pretty certain that I would be among those she would propose. I went to her house, and very fortunately I met Madame de Marchais in the drawing-room, to whom I recited my ill-luck point by point. "Well," she cried, "that astonishes you? Not me. That is just like her! She has simply forgotten you!" At once she went into the dressing-room where Madame de Pompadour was, and immediately afterwards I heard shouts of laughter. I took that as a happy omen. In fact, when going to mass Madame de Pompadour could not see me without laughing again at having left me in oblivion.

"I guessed rightly," Madame de Marchais said to me when she saw me once more, "but it will be made good." Thus I received a pension of twelve hundred livres from the *Mercure* and was content.

If M. de Boissy had only had to edit it, he could have taken things easily; but he had to keep it from failing, and for that he had neither the relations, the resources, nor the activity of the Abbé Raynal, who in the absence of la Bruère did it, and did it well.

Devoid of help, and finding nothing passable in the papers left him, Boissy wrote me a letter that was a positive signal of distress. "You have made them give me the *Mercure* to no purpose; this benefit is lost if you do not add to it by coming to my aid. Prose or verse, whatever you please, I will think anything good that comes from you. But relieve me quickly from this anxiety, I implore you, in the name of the lifelong friendship I have sworn for you!"

This letter made me sleepless; I saw the unfortunate man held up to ridicule and the *Mercure* in bad repute because of him, if he let his dearth appear. I was in a fever all night long, and in this state of crisis and agitation the first idea of writing a tale came to me. Having passed the night without closing an eye, turning over in my head the subject—which I called "Alcibiade"—I rose and wrote it at a stretch, off-hand, and sent it to him. This tale had an unexpected success. I had insisted on anonymity. No one knew whose it was, and at dinner with Helvétius, where were the finest connoisseurs, they honoured me by attributing it to Voltaire or Montesquieu.

Boissy, overjoyed at the enlarged sales this novelty gave to the *Mercure*, redoubled his prayers for more work of the same kind from me. I wrote "Soliman II."

for him, then "Scrupule" and several others. Such was the origin of the Contes Moraux which have since had such a vogue in Europe. Thus Boissy did for me far more than I for him. However, he did not enjoy his fortune for long, and when he died, and it was necessary to replace him, Madame de Pompadour said to the King: "Sire, will you not give the *Mercure* to the man who saved it?" The royal letters were conferred on me. So I had to make up my mind to leave Versailles. Meanwhile I was offered a chance which seemed at that moment better and more solid. I don't know what instinct, which with me can always be relied on, prevented me from accepting it. The Marshal de Belle-Isle was Minister of War; his only son, the Comte de Gisors, had just received his commission in the carabineers, commanded by the Comte de Provence. The lieutenant of this regiment had a personal secretary with twelve thousand livres pay, and this position was vacant. A young man of Versailles called Dorlif applied for it, saying he was known to me. "Very well," said the Comte de Gisors, "ask M. Marmontel to come and see me. I shall be delighted to talk with him." Dorlif wrote little poems, and sometimes came to read them to me, that was our only tie. However, I believed him to be a good and respectable youth, and such was the character I gave him. "I am going to speak confidentially to you," said Comte de Gisors, whom I met for the first time. "The young man is not suitable for this position. I need a man who can be my friend at once, and on whom I can count as on a second self. The Duke of Nivernois, my father-in-law, suggests someone, but I mistrust the ease with which the great give their recommendations, and if you can find me a man of whom you can be sure, and who is such as I ask, I will take him—not daring," he added, "to hope for you yourself." "One month earlier, M. le Comte, I would have asked for this honour myself. The brevet of the *Mercure*, which the King has just granted me, is an obligation I cannot break so soon, without seeming frivolous; but I will search amongst all I know for a man who will suit you.

In Paris there was a young man I knew called Suard—a fine and subtle mind, upright and wise, lovable in character, gentle and amiable in converse, well read, speaking well, his style in writing pure, easy and natural, and in the best taste: above all, discreet, reserved and sincere. It was he I had in my mind. I invited him to come and see me in Paris, where I went to spare him the journey. On one side this situation appeared to him very advantageous, on the other very hard and exacting. We were at war; he would have to follow the Comte de Gisors into battle, and Suard, indolent by nature, would have been glad of this chance, but not at the cost of his liberty or peace. He asked for twenty-four hours to think it over. The next morning he came to say that it was impossible for him to accept the position, but that M. Delaire, his friend, would like it, and that he was recommended by the Duke of Nivernois. I knew Delaire to be a man of intelligence, very honest, sound and reliable, and exceedingly strict as to morals. "Bring your friend to me," I said; "I will propose him, and the place is assured." We arranged with Delaire to say simply that my choice agreed with that of the Duke de Nivernois. M. de Gisors was charmed with this agreement and Delaire was accepted. "I must go," the gallant young man said to him; "the army may be engaged at any moment, and I wish to be there. You will join me as soon as possible." As it happened, a few days after his arrival the battle of Crevelt took place, and he fell at the head of the carabineers, mortally wounded. Delaire arrived only to bury him.

I asked M. de Marigny if he considered the secretaryship of works compatible with the privilege and labour of the *Mercure*. He replied that he thought it impossible to attend to both. "Give me my dismissal, then, for I have not the strength to ask you for it." I received it, and Madame Geoffrin offered me a lodging with her. I accepted gratefully, begging her to have the kindness to let me pay—a condition to which I made her consent.

Behold me thrust back into Paris by destiny—the Paris I had left so gladly; and behold me more dependent than ever on the public I had thought myself separated from for life. What had become of my resolutions? Two sisters of a marriageable age at a convent; the facility of my old aunts for giving credit to all comers, and of ruining their business by contracting debts that I had to pay every year; my future, which had to be carefully considered, having only put by the ten thousand francs which I had used as a surety for M. Odde; l'Académie Française, where I would only arrive through the career of letters; lastly, the attraction of this literary and philosophical society taking me to its heart: these were the reasons and excuses for the inconstancy that made me renounce the sweetest and most delicious peace, to come to Paris to edit a paper—that is to say, condemn myself to the labours of Sisyphus or the Danaides.

SIXTH BOOK

MY work for the *Mercure* was well seconded. The time was favourable; a brood of young poets were trying their wings. I encouraged this first flight by publishing the brilliant essays of Malfilâtre; I conceived hopes for him which would have been fulfilled, had not a premature death taken him from us. The just praise that I gave the poem of "Jumonville" revived in the sensitive and virtuous Thomas a great talent frozen by inhuman critics. I presented to the public the happy first-fruits of the translation of the "Georgics" of Virgil, and I venture to say that if this divine poem can be translated into elegant and harmonious French verse, it was by the Abbé Delille. By inserting an heroic epistle of Colardeau, I showed how much the style of this young poet approached to the perfect models of his art in melody, purity, grace and nobility. I spoke in praise of the heroic epistles of la Harpe. Lastly, apropos of the success of Lemièrre's "Hypermnestre": "See, then, three new tragic poets of brilliant promise: the author of 'Iphigenia in Taurus,' in the wise and simple way he gradually increases the interest of the action, and in passages of vehemence worthy of the greatest masters; the author of 'Astarbe' in inspired poetry of lively and harmonious versification, and the proud, fearless drawing of a character which is not lacking in just as noble contrasts as the plot develops; and the author of 'Hypermnestre' in pictures of the utmost force. It is for the public," I added, "to protect and encourage them, and solace them against the fury of the envious. The arts need both the critic's torch, and the spur of glory. It is not to the persecuted Cid, but to the Cid triumphant in persecution, that 'Cinna' owes its birth. Encouragement only inspires little minds with negligence and presumption; to lofty souls and rich imaginations—in one word, for great talents—intoxication of success becomes the intoxication of genius. For them the only poison to fear is that which chills them." In pleading the cause of writers, I mixed a quite severe, although pure, criticism with my moderate praise, in the same tone that friend takes with friend. It was this spirit of benevolence and equity that won over the young writers to me and made them my collaborators.

The provincial contributions were still more abundant. Not all were valuable, but if the verse or prose pieces had only slight carelessness, or faults of detail, I took care to correct them. Even if there came to my pen some good verses or interesting lines I slipped them in without saying a word, and the authors never complained to me of these small infidelities!

On the artistic and scientific side I had many resources. At that time, the problem of inoculation was agitating medicine. The comet predicted by Halley and announced by Clairaut held the gaze of astronomers; physics gave me some curious observations to publish: for instance, they were grateful to me for having made known how to cool liquids in summer. Chemistry communicated a new remedy for the bite of a viper, and the invaluable secret of calling back the drowned to life. Surgery told me of its courageous and marvellous successes. In natural history the pencil of Buffon presented me with a crowd of pictures to choose from. Vaucanson allowed me to describe ingenious machines to the public; the architect Leroy, and Cochin, the engraver, having explored as artists, one the ruins of Greece, the other the marvels of Italy, vied with each other in supplying me with brilliant descriptions or learned discoveries, and my extracts of their travels were amusing voyages for my readers. Cochin, a man of parts, whose pen was hardly less pure and correct than his engraving tool, wrote me some excellent things on the arts he studied. I remember two that painters and sculptors have doubtless not forgotten: one "On Light in Shade," and the other "On the Difficulties of Painting and Sculpture compared with Each Other." At his dictation I described the exhibition of pictures in 1759, one of the finest ever seen, which has since been viewed at the salon of arts. This scrutiny was a model of sane and mild criticism; faults were noted and remarked on and the beauties exalted. The public were not deceived and the artists were satisfied.

Just at this time a fresh career was opened to rhetoric. The French Academy invited young orators to praise great men, and what was my joy to have to publish that the first in this list, winning the prize by a noble panegyric on Maurice de Saxe, was that interesting young man, the author of the poem of "Jumonville"; so often I had revived his courage, and the sincerity of my counsels pleased him at least as much as the equity of my praise; in the secrecy of the most intimate friendship, he made me the confidant of his thoughts and the censor of his writings. I got into connection with all the academies of the kingdom, as much for the arts as for letters, and apart from the productions they willingly sent me, the mere programmes of their prizes made interesting reading, in view of the wise and profound ideas shown by the questions given to be resolved, were they on morals, political economics or on the useful, helpful or healthful arts. I was astonished sometimes at the enlightenment shown in these questions coming to us from the depths of the provinces; nothing, according to my thinking, showed better the tendencies and advance of the public mind.

Thus, whilst maintaining a frivolous and amusing side, the *Mercure* unceasingly acquired weight and consistency in usefulness. For my part, doing my utmost to make it both pleasant and serviceable, I frequently slipped in a short tale, the kernel of which had an ethical interest. The apology for the theatre that I wrote, whilst commenting on Rousseau's letter to d'Alembert on the theatre performances, had all the success truth has when combating sophisms, and reason when she fights hand to hand and presses close on eloquence.

In Paris the republic of letters is divided into several classes, with little communication between them. I neglected none of them, and amongst the short poems written in middle-class circles, any that had grace and naturalness were of use to me. At a jeweller's of the Place Dauphine I often dined with two poets of the old Opéra Comique, who had a genius for gaiety, and were never in better vein than in the bar of a beer-house. They were happiest in their cups, but before they got drunk they had moments of inspiration that made one believe what Horace says about wine. One of them, called Gallet, was said to be a good-for-nothing, but I never saw him except at table, and I can only speak about his friend Panard, who was a good fellow and whom I liked.

This scamp, however, was an original creature. He was a grocer in the Rue des Lombards, and, more assiduous in attending the Théâtre de la Foire than to his shop, was already ruined when I met him. He was dropsical, but neither drank less nor was less joyous because of it; he troubled as little about death as about life—so much so that in misery or captivity, on a bed of pain and almost at the last gasp, he always made fun of everything.

After his bankruptcy, a refugee in the Temple—then an asylum for insolvent debtors—he received every day reminders from his creditors, saying: "Behold me in the temple of memories!" When his dropsy was at the point of suffocating him, and the vicar of the Temple came to administer extreme unction: "Oh, monsieur l'abbé," he exclaimed, "come to grease my boots?" (prepare me for death). "It is useless, for I am leaving by water!" The same day he wrote to his friend Colle, wishing him a happy new year in couplets.

Panard, good fellow, as heedless as his friend, as forgetful of the past and negligent of the future, had, in his misfortunes, rather the tranquillity of a child than the indifference of a philosopher. He completely disregarded the task of feeding, lodging and clothing himself—that was his friends' affair, and he had enough good ones to merit this confidence. In manners and in mind he had much of the natural simplicity and artlessness of la Fontaine. Never did an exterior promise less delicacy, nevertheless he had it in thought and expression. More than once at table, when he was half-seas over, as they say, I have seen this shapeless body, this gross envelope, produce impromptu couplets full of acute penetration and grace. So, therefore, when the *Mercure* of the month needed a charming verse or two I would go and see my friend Panard. "Rummage in the wig-box," he would say. This box was a terrible confusion where this lovable poet's verses were heaped up pell-mell, scribbled on scraps of paper. I reproached him on seeing nearly all the manuscripts stained with wine. "Take them," he said; "it is the stamp of genius!" He had such a tender affection for wine that he always spoke of it as his dearest friend, and, glass in hand, looking at the object of his worship and delight, he would be moved to tears. I have seen him shed them for a very strange reason; do not think this just a tale, this characteristic story, it depicts a toper perfectly.

After the death of his friend Gallet, meeting him on my way, I wished to tell him how I shared his sorrow: " Ah, sir, my grief is sharp and deep ! A friend of thirty years with whom I spent my days—walking, at the theatre, or cabaret—always together ! I have lost him; I shall never sing or drink with him again ! He is dead; I am alone and don't know what to do !" Bewailing thus, the poor man melted into tears, and so far nothing is more natural, but hear what he added: " You know he died at the Temple ? I went there to weep and lament at his grave. What a grave ! Oh, sir, they have placed him under a gutter-spout—he, who since he came to years of discretion had not drunk a glass of water !"

You will now see me living in Paris with people of very different manners; and I have a wonderful gallery of portraits to paint for you, if only I have bright enough colours; I will try, at any rate, to draw some of their features.

I have said that, during Madame de Tencin's life-time, Madame Geoffrin visited her, and the cunning old woman divined so well the reason of her visits that she said to her cronies: " Do you know what the Geoffrin comes here for ? She comes to see if she can collect my stock !" Indeed, at her death, some of her society—what remained of the best of it (for Fontenelle and Montesquieu were no longer alive)—went to the new-comer; but she did not confine herself to that small colony. Rich enough to make her house the rendezvous of art and letters, and recognising that this was a way of securing amusing company for her old age, and also a distinguished way of living, Madame Geoffrin inaugurated two dinners, one on Monday for artists, the other on Wednesdays for writers. It was a remarkable thing that, without a smattering of art or literature, this woman, who had read or learned nothing save at random, did not feel strange in either company—she was even at home; but she had the good sense to speak only about what she knew well, and to allow speech to the better-informed on all else; always politely attentive, never seeming bored, even if she did not understand. She was still more skilful at presiding and watching, keeping uncontrolled spirits well in hand and marking the limits of freedom by a word, a gesture; holding those who wished to go beyond by an invisible thread, "Allons voilà qui est bien," was usually her signal of prudence to her guests; however vehement the conversations were that exceeded bounds, at her house one could always say, as Virgil said of the bees:

Hi motus animorum atque hæc certamina tanta
Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescent.

Hers was a curious character, difficult to seize and describe, because it was all in half-tones and nuance; decided, however, but without any marked characteristics to distinguish and define her nature. She was kind, but not very sensitive; helpful, but with none of the charm of benevolence; quick to help the unfortunate, but she would not see them—for fear of being agitated; a sure and faithful friend, rather a busy-body, but timid and uneasy in serving her friends, fearing to compromise her credit or peace. She was simple in her tastes, clothes, furniture, but with a studied simplicity, having refinement in the elegancies of luxury, but nothing of its show and vanity; modest in her air, carriage and manners, but with a groundwork of pride and even vainglory. Nothing flattered her more than association with the great. She saw them seldom in their homes, where she was ill at ease, but she knew how to attract them to her own by a coquetry that was unconsciously flattering; and there was extreme adroitness in the natural, half-respectful, half-familiar way she received them. Always free with them—to the limits of propriety—but she never passed these limits. To stand well with heaven and not ill with the world, she had made herself a sort of clandestine religion; she went to mass as one takes something for luck; she had an apartment in a religious convent and a stall at the church of the Capuchins, but used them with as much mystery as the gallant ladies of the time their little retreats. All ostentation was hateful to her. Her greatest care was to avoid public scandal. She eagerly desired celebrity, and to be thought much of in the world, but she wished it to be without fuss. A little like that splenetic Englishman who thought he was made of glass, she avoided as dangerous all that might expose her to the shock of human passions, and hence her weakness and timidity as soon as charity demanded courage. The man for whom she would willingly loosen her purse-strings could not be so sure that she would stand up for him; and on this point she had ingenious excuses. For instance, one of her maxims was, that if you hear ill spoken of any of your friends, you must never defend them too vigorously or oppose the slanderer, as that was the way to irritate the viper and rouse his venom. She liked her friends to be praised very soberly, and for their qualities, not for their actions; for, hearing it said that someone is sincere and kind, everyone can say to themselves: "I am kind and sincere." "But," said she, "if one cites praiseworthy conduct, or a virtuous action, not everyone can say they have done as much, and they take the praise as a reproach, and try to underrate it." What she valued most in a friend was a discretion that was never compromised, and, as an example, she mentioned Bernard, who was, in fact, the most coldly formal man in word and deed. "One can be at ease about him; no one complains about him, and one has never to defend him." It was a warning to hasty people like myself and several others, and if any of us found ourselves in peril or in want, whatever the cause, and whether we were wrong or not, her first impulse was to accuse us; because of this, I took the liberty one day of telling her, perhaps too fiercely, that she wanted friends who were always infallible and always happy.

One of her weaknesses was to interfere in her friends' affairs, to be their confidante, counsellor and guide. By initiating her into one's secrets, and allowing her to direct and sometimes scold, one was certain of touching her tenderest spot; but even respectful want of docility chilled her at once, and by a little dry ill-humour she showed how much she was offended. It is true that in order to behave prudently one could not do better than consult her. Knowledge of the world was her supreme science, about all else her ideas were frivolous and ordinary; but in the study of manners and customs, in the knowledge of men, and especially women, she was profound, and capable of giving sound instruction. So if she mixed a little vanity in this desire to advise and direct, there was also much kindness and sincere friendship, and a wish to be useful.

With regard to her mind, although educated solely by converse with people, it was excellent, honest and shrewd. Natural taste and good sense gave her the right word and expression in speaking. She wrote purely, simply, in a clear, concise style, but like an ill-educated woman who boasted of it. In a charming eulogy written for her by your uncle, you will read that an Italian abbé came to offer her the dedication of an Italian and French grammar. "The dedication of a grammar to me! To me, who cannot even spell!" It was the simple truth. Her real talent was in relating; there she excelled, and would enliven a whole table, without preparation or art or pretension—only to set an example—for she neglected no means by which her society was made more agreeable.

Of this society, the gayest, the most animated, and the most amusing in his gaiety was d'Alembert. After having spent his morning with algebraical figures, and solving problems in dynamics and astronomy, he emerged from his lodging like a schoolboy from school, asking for nothing but to enjoy himself; and the vivid and delightful turn taken by this brilliant, profound and strong mind, made one forget the scholar and philosopher, and see only the lovable man. The source of this natural playfulness was a pure soul, free from passion, content with itself, and the gratification each day of some new truth to reward and crown his work—the exclusive privilege of the exact sciences, not obtained so completely from any other study.

Mairan's serenity, his sweet temper and laughter, came from the same cause. Age had done for him what nature had done for d'Alembert. It had restrained the transports of his soul, and what it had left of heat was the vivacity of a Gascon mind, but sobered, wise and just, original and of exquisite taste. It was true that the philosopher of Beziers was sometimes anxious about what was happening in China, but after he received several letters from his friend Father Parennin, he was beaming with joy.

Oh, my children, what souls are they who are disquieted only over the course of the ecliptic or the manners and arts of the Chinese ! No vices to degrade them, no regrets to wound, no passions to sadden or torment—they are free with the freedom that is the companion to joy and without which there is never pure and lasting gaiety.

Marivaux would also have liked to possess this merry humour, but he had something on his mind that preoccupied him unceasingly, and gave him an anxious air. As his works had acquired him the reputation of a subtle and critical mind, he thought himself obliged always to display this, and was continually lying in wait for ideas susceptible of analysis and opposition, and then play one against the other and subtilise on them. He held that such and such a thing was true "up to a certain point or in certain circumstances," but had always some restriction or distinction to make, which he only had observed. This application of the mind was laborious for him and often painful for others, but sometimes he threw a brilliant light or fresh point of view on a subject. However, one saw by the restlessness of his glance that the success he had, or was going to have, gave him anxiety. I think there never was a self-esteem more delicate or more ticklish and fearful, but as he spared others they respected his; only one regretted he could not be simpler and more natural.

Chastellux, whose mind was never clear enough, although a fine one that from time to time flashed a very brilliant ray through the light mist that surrounded his thoughts—Chastellux was the most affable and candid of this group. Whether he doubted the rightness of his ideas and tried to reassure himself, or whether he wished to test them by discussion, he loved disputes and always engaged in them willingly, but gracefully and with fairness; and as soon as there was a glimmer of truth, be it from you or himself, he was delighted. No man ever used his own sense to appreciate that of others more than he. A witticism or ingenuity, a timely tale, charmed him; you could see him thrill with joy, and as the conversation became more brilliant so Chastellux' eyes and face lightened; all success pleased him as if it were his own.

The Abbé Morellet, with more clarity and order in an immense store of knowledge of all sorts, was an inexhaustible source, in conversation, of profound, sane, uncorrupted ideas. He showed himself at our dinners a sincere soul, a strong and honest mind, and as upright in heart as in mind. One of his gifts, and the most distinctive, was a finely ironical humour, such as only Swift had had before him. With this talent for being caustic if he wished, no man used it less; when he allowed himself to mock people it was to chasten insolence or punish malignity.

Saint Lambert, with his delicate, yet withal cold, politeness, expressed in conversation the same fine elegance one finds in his work. Without being naturally gay, he was stimulated by the gaiety of others; and no one spoke with more ordered reasoning or more exquisite taste in literary or philosophical discussion. This perfection came from the little court of Lunéville, where he had lived and whose tone he retained.

Helvétius, absorbed in his ambition for literary celebrity, came to us with his head raging with his morning's work. To write a book that would stand out in his century, his first care was to find some new truth to bring to light, or to produce some daring fresh thought and defend it. Now, for two thousand years new and fruitful ideas have been infinitely rare, so he took the paradox that he had developed in his book " On the Mind " as his thesis. Whether by his own vehemence he had persuaded himself to what he wished to persuade others, or whether he had still to fight his own doubts and exercised himself in combating them, to our amusement he had to throw into our disputes each successive question that occupied him, or whatever difficulty that bothered him; after giving him the pleasure of hearing them discussed for some time, we made him promise to let himself follow the trend of our talk. Then he would throw himself into them completely and warmly, as simple and natural, as naïvely sincere in this familiar give-

and-take as he is methodical and sophisticated in his works. Nothing is less like the ingenuousness of his character and daily life than the designed and artificial eccentricity of his writings; and this unlikeness is always found in the manners and opinions of those who search out the strange and extraordinary. Helvétius was in soul the contrary of all he said. There never was a better man: liberal, generous, without ostentation, benevolent because he was good, he contrived to slander everybody and himself, in order to make out that moral actions were governed by interest; but setting aside his books, one loved him for what he was: and you will soon see what an attraction his house was to literary people.

A man still more ardent for fame was Thomas; but more in harmony with himself, he only hoped to succeed by his rare talent of expressing emotions and ideas; certain of being able to give ordinary subjects the originality of great eloquence and fresh developments, breadth and brilliance to known truths. It is true that, absorbed in his thoughts, and ceaselessly preoccupied by what might extend his fame, he neglected small courtesies and the slight merit of being amiable in society. The gravity of his character was sweet, but withdrawn and silent, hardly smiling at our merriment, and never contributing to it. Rarely even delivering himself on subjects that were his own except in strictest intimacy or before a few people; only then was he dazzling and astonishingly fertile. He was asked to our dinners, but he was valued solely for his literary worth and moral qualities. Thomas sacrificed to virtue, truth and glory, but never to the graces.

It is not my plan to describe the whole circle of our guests. There were the indolent, who merely amused themselves; well-informed people, but miserly of their bounty, who came harvesting without troubling to sow. Assuredly the Abbé Raynal was not of this number; and, in the use he made of his plentiful knowledge, if he sometimes gave to excess, it was not in an excess of economy. The robust vigour of his philosophy was not yet visible, and the vast amount of his knowledge was amorphous; sagacity, honesty and precision were the most notable qualities of his mind, and to them he added a goodness and urbanity that made him dear to us. However, his facility of speech and enormous memory needed moderation. His orations seldom allowed dialogue, and it was only in his old age, when, less quick and overflowing, he learned the pleasure of talking.

I don't know if it was Madame Geoffrin's plan to draw to herself any stranger of repute who came to Paris, and make her house renowned throughout Europe, or whether it was the natural consequence of the attraction and fame given to the house by this group of writers, but no prince, or minister, or famous man or woman from any country who came to see Madame Geoffrin, but desired to be invited to one of our dinners and had great pleasure in joining us. On these days especially Madame Geoffrin displayed all her charm, and said to us: "Let us be amiable!" Seldom, indeed, were these entertainments wanting in good conversation.

Amongst the strangers who came to live in Paris or to make a long stay, she chose the cleverest and most amiable and admitted them to our company. Of these I select three who were inferior to no Frenchmen in pleasing mental qualities or inspiration: the Abbé Galiani, the Marquis of Caraccioli, since then ambassador to Naples, and Count Creutz, the Swedish minister.

The Abbé Galiani in figure was the handsomest little harlequin that Italy ever produced, but on the harlequin shoulders was a Machiavellian head. Philosophically an Epicurean with a melancholy soul, and seeing the ridiculous side of everything, there was nothing in ethics or politics about which he couldn't tell a good story, and these tales were always to the point and had the flavour of an unexpected and ingenious allusion. Picture with that the most naïve prettiness in his gestures and way of speaking, and imagine the pleasure we took in the contrast of the profound meaning of the tale and the bantering air of the teller. I don't exaggerate at all when I say that one could forget everything else in order to listen to him for hours. But his rôle finished, he became nothing, and had the appearance of waiting, sad and dumb, in a corner for the cue that brought him on the stage again. It was the same in argument as in recounting; you were compelled to listen; if he was sometimes interrupted, he said: "Just let me finish; you will soon have the chance to reply to me." And then, after having made a wide circle of inductions (for that was his way), he would at last conclude, and should you want to argue with him, he slipped in amongst the crowd and escaped.

At first sight Caraccioli had the thick heaviness that one associates with stupidity. To animate his eyes and lighten his features he had to speak, and as his vivid intelligence, so penetrating and lucid, awoke, it seemed to give out sparks; delicacy, gaiety and originality, a natural expression, a charming smile and the sensitiveness of his gaze united in making his ugliness lovable, interesting and witty. He spoke our language badly and with difficulty, but in his own he was eloquent, and when the French word escaped him he borrowed the word or image or manner from Italian, and thus enriched his speech with a thousand daring and picturesque expressions, to our great envy. He, too, accompanied his conversation with the Napolitan gestures which in the Abbé Galiani gave such life to his words; one might say of both that they were intelligent to the tips of their fingers. Equally excellent were their fables, nearly all of them having a profound moral worth. Caraccioli had made a philosophic study of men, more as a politician and statesman than as a satirist. He had a wide view of nations, their customs and policies, and if he cited a particular trait it was as an example to give support to his opinions.

With inexhaustible riches of knowledge and a very gracious manner of communicating them, he had in our eyes the merit of being an excellent creature. Not one of us would have thought of making a friend of the Abbé Galiani, but each one of us hoped for the friendship of Caraccioli; and I, who enjoyed it for a long time, cannot tell you how desirable it was.

But the man who was dearest to me and whom I loved most tenderly was Count de Creutz. He also belonged to Madame Geoffrin's literary circle and attended her dinners; less anxious to please and occupied in attracting attention, often thoughtful and distrait, but the most charming convivialist when he abandoned himself to us without abstraction. To him beyond all others nature had given tenderness, warmth, and delicacy of moral sense and taste, love of the beautiful in all its forms, and the passion of genius as well as moral energy; she had also given him the gift of expressing and describing with fiery touches what had seized his imagination or struck his soul; never was man a poet if he were not one. Still young, endowed mentally with prodigious learning, speaking French just like us, and nearly all the European languages as well as his own, without counting dead tongues; well versed in ancient and modern literatures, speaking of chemistry as a chemist, of natural history as a disciple of Linnæus, and an accurate observer of climatic conditions and their diverse products in Sweden and Spain, he was a source of erudition adorned by the most brilliant elocution.

I have told you enough to make you feel how much fascination and interest there was in this meeting-point of the writing world. As for me, I had my corner there, not too bold or too timid, gay, natural, even somewhat free, popular in society, beloved by those I most esteemed and loved myself. Although I lodged with Madame Geoffrin I was not one of her first favourites: she knew I was willing to entertain in my turn by stories, or the sort of jesting that amused her, but in my personal conduct I was not complaisant enough to consult her and follow her advice, and she was not sure I had enough wisdom to save her the worry that her friend's imprudence caused her at times. Therefore there was a touch of doubt and uncertainty in her goodness to me, and I tried to please her, but with reserve, for I could not let her dominate me.

However, she saw my success with her world, and I was as welcome to her Monday dinners as to the literary ones. Artists liked me because, being both interested and ready to learn, I talked always about what they understood better than I. I have forgotten to say that over my lodgings in Versailles was the room where the pictures were kept that decorated the Palace in turn, and these were nearly all by great masters. This was my morning walk and one of my recreations; I have spent hours there with old Portail, the worthy guardian of these treasures, talking about the genius and mode of the different Italian schools, and the distinctive manner of the great painters. In the gardens I formed some idea of sculpture by comparing the antique and the modern. These preliminary studies prepared me for discussion, and by allowing them the amusement of teaching me, and by taking pleasure in listening to them, I gained merit in their eyes. With them I was careful to parade only literary information that concerned the fine arts, for it was easy to see that, with much natural wit, they nearly all lacked culture or learning. Carlo Vanloo possessed a painter's talent in the highest possible degree without being a genius; inspiration was wanting, and to compensate for this he had not studied enough things that elevate the mind and fill the imagination with great subjects and thoughts.

Vernet, admirable in painting water, air, and light, and the play of these elements, had these things very vividly in mind, but outside that was an ordinary man, though gay enough. Souflot was a man of intelligence, very thoughtful in his conduct, a clever and learned architect, but his thought was circumscribed. Boucher had imaginative fire, but little truth, and less nobility; he saw the Graces in evil places, and painted Venus and the Virgin as footlight nymphs; his language, as well as his pictures, reflected the manners of his models and his workshop. Lemoine, the sculptor, moved one because of the simple modesty that went with his genius; even about his own art, in which he was accomplished, he spoke little, and he scarcely answered if he were praised—a touching timidity in a man whose glance was all spirit and soul. Latour had enthusiasm, and employed it in painting the philosophers of the age, but his brain was confused by politics and morality, on which he believed he could talk learnedly, and he felt humiliated if someone spoke to him about painting. You have a sketch of his portrait of me, my children; it was the price of my amiability in listening to him decide the destinies of Europe. With the others, I studied their art, and for this the artist's dinners were attractive and useful.

Amongst the amateurs who attended there were some of fair attainments; with them I took no pains to vary the conversation or reanimate it when it languished, and they seemed quite satisfied. One only showed me no goodwill at all, and his cold politeness made me feel estranged; this was Count de Caylus.

I don't know which of the two forestalled the other, but I had hardly recognised his character, when I felt that he had as great an aversion for me as I for him. I have never troubled to find out how I displeased him, but I know well what I disliked in him. It was the self-importance he gave himself over his most futile and meagre talents; the value he attached to his minute researches and antique knick-knacks; the kind of domination he acquired over the artists and which he abused, favouring the mediocre who paid court to him, and humbling those who, proud of their strength, refused to intrigue for his support. In fine, his was a subtle and cunning vanity, an avid and imperious pride, disguised in simple and stupid forms. Compliant and bland to the people of position on whom the artists depended, he gained an influence on the former that the latter dreaded. He frequented well-educated people and got them to write accounts of the charms the dealers sold him: he made a collection of rubbish and declared they were antiquities, proffered prizes according to Isis and Osiris so as to appear to be initiated to their mysteries, and with this erudite charlatanry, thrust himself into the academies without knowing a word of Greek or Latin. He and his extollers said so much about "simple style," "simple forms" and "beautiful simplicity" that the ignorant believed him; and because of his relations with the dilettanti, he passed in Italy and all over Europe as an inspirer of the arts. So I had the natural antipathy for him that simple true men have for charlatans.

After having dined with Madame Geoffrin and the writers or artists, I was still with her in the evening amidst a more intimate society, for she favoured me by admitting me to her little suppers. The meal was light: commonly a fowl, spinach and an omelette. Few were invited, at most five or six particular friends, or four men and women of the most distinguished society, well-matched and mutually pleased to be together. But no matter who made up the circle, Bernard and I were of it. Once only was Bernard excluded and I alone admitted. Three women and one man composed the group. The three women, like enough to the three goddesses of Mount Ida, were the beautiful Countess de Brionne, the lovely Marquise de Duras, and pretty Countess d'Egmont. Their Paris was Prince Louis de Rohan, but I suspect that at that time he gave the apple to Minerva, for to my taste the Venus was the seductive and lively d'Egmont. Daughter of Maréchal de Richelieu, she had the graceful vivacity and wit of her father; she had also, they said, his fickle and libertine humour, but on that point Madame Geoffrin and I pretended to know nothing. The young Marquise de Duras, as modest as Madame d'Egmont was pretty, gave more the idea of Juno because of her noble severity and style of beauty, which was neither elegant nor slender. If Countess de Brionne was not Venus herself, it was not because she did not unite all that one imagines ideal beauty to be, in the perfect regularity of her body and features: one charm was lacking, without which there is no Venus in the world, and which made the glamour of Madame d'Egmont, and this was voluptuousness. Prince de Rohan was young, active and heedless, a good fellow: haughty by fits and starts with rivals of his own class, but familiarly gay with free and simple men of letters like myself.

You can well believe that my vanity exercised every means I had to be amusing and charming at these suppers. The new fables that I wrote then, of which these ladies received the first-fruits, were an amusement for them, either before or after supper. They arranged meetings to hear them, and if some happening prevented our "little supper," then we assembled at Madame de Brionne's for dinner. I confess that never success flattered me so much as my readings to this small circle, where wit, taste, beauty, all the graces, were my judges, or, rather, my belauders. There was not in my sketches or dialogues one line, were it ever so delicate and fine, that was not quickly felt: the pleasure I gave them was enchanting. What enraptured me was to see so close to me the most beautiful eyes in the world shed tears at the little touching scenes, thrilling with love and naturalness. But in spite of their extreme politeness I perceived their silence where I was weak or cold, or where I had failed to find the right word or the exact shade of reality; and this I noted to be corrected at leisure.

After the idea I have given you of Madame Geoffrin's society, no doubt you will fancy it ought to have taken the place of all other company, but I had old and good friends in Paris who were well content to see me, and with whom it was happiness to find myself. Madame Harenc, Madame Desfourniels, Mademoiselle Clairon, and especially Madame d'Herouville, had the right to share my best moments. Also I had made new friends in a charming circle. Neither were the major-domos of the Palace neglected.

It must be said, however, that there lacked in Madame Geoffrin's society an attraction that I valued most highly—liberty of thought. With her sweet "Voilà qui est bien!" she never ceased to hold our minds on a leading-string; elsewhere I had dinners where one was more at ease.

The freest, or rather the most licentious, of all were those held once a week by a tax farmer called Pelletier to eight or ten bachelors, all friends of mirth. The maddest of the guests were Collé and the younger Crébillon; there was one continual bout of merriment between them, and anyone who liked could join in. Personalities were never wounded, only the vanity of fine wits was attacked, and without any consideration, so that one had to take it off and sacrifice it on entering the lists. Collé was brilliant beyond telling, and his adversary, Crébillon, especially had the skill to animate and provoke him. Sometimes, bored with being an idle spectator, I threw myself into the arena at my own risk and peril, and got some rather severe lessons in modesty there. Sometimes a certain Monticourt joined in the dispute, a dexterous and ready banterer, what was called then a jester of a high order; and literary vanity, which he attacked wantonly, gave us no power over him, for he confessed himself devoid of all talent, and so was invulnerable to criticism. I compared him to a cat who lay on its back, paws in air, showing only its claws. The other guests laughed at our attacks, and this pleasure we allowed them, but when the gaiety ceased to be mocking and critical then they all vied with each other. Bernard alone, for he also came to these parties, was always reserved. The contrast between Bernard's character and his reputation was peculiar. The style of his poetry may well have gained him the nickname of "Gentil" in his youth, but he was anything but charming when I knew him. His gallantry was hackneyed; when he had said to one woman that she was as fresh as Hebe or had the complexion of Flora, to another that she had the smile of the Graces or the torso of a nymph, then he had said all. I have seen him at Choisy, at the rose fête, which he celebrated every year, in a sort of little temple decorated with painted scenery, and so hung with garlands of roses on that day that we were dizzy. There was a supper, where the women pretended to be the divinities of spring, and Bernard was the high prieſt. Assuredly it was the inspirational moment, however little susceptible he was to it: well even then, not a sally, or any playfulness or a ready compliment escaped him; he was juſt coldly polite. With fellow-writers, even in their moſt brilliant gaiety, he was ſtill only civil, and nobody was more ſterile than he in our serious and philosophical discussions. His knowledge of literature was superficial: he knew only Ovid. Therefore he was reduced to silence about everything in the realm of thought; he never had an opinion, and no one has ever been able to say what Bernard thought about any subject of importance. He lived, so they said, on the reputation of his erotic poems, but he was prudent enough not to publish them. We foresaw their fate were they printed: we knew they were cold—an unpardonable vice, above all in a poem on the art of love; but such was the kindness that his reserve, modeſty and refinement inspired us with that none of us, while he lived, divulged this fatal secret. I come back to the dinner when Collé displayed such a different character from Bernard. The spirit of gaiety never had so continual and rich a glow. I cannot tell you why we laughed so much, but I do know that we laughed until we cried at all he said. Everything became comic or amusing as soon as his brain got over excited. Often enough he was indecent, it is true, but at this dinner we were not too particular on that point.

A very peculiar incident broke up this merry group. Pelletier fell in love with an adventuress who made him believe she was a daughter of Louis XV. Every Sunday she went to Versailles to see, so she said, the Princesses her siſters; and she always came back with some little present—a jewel or case, a watch or a box with the portrait of one of the ladies. Pelletier, who had wit, but a weak and flighty head, believed all this, and married this vagabond in secret. After that you can well believe his house did not suit us any more, and he, discovering his miſtake soon and the shameful foolishness of it, went mad and retired to Charenton to die.

A decenter and more gracious liberty, a less extravagant but juſt as lively gaiety reigned at Madame Filleul's suppers, where young Countess de Seran shone in the radiance of her unfolding beauty and naïve playfulness. Here no one troubled to be witty—that was the leaſt concern of the hoſtess and her gueſts—although they were infinitely so, and with a moſt natural and delicate wit. But before speaking of the delights of this society, there was one whose attraction coſt me dear enough to be unforgotten. Liſten, children, how a chain of chance incidents brought about one of the moſt eventful issues of my life.

In Madame Filleul's company I met Cury again; he was unhappy, and I loved him all the more for it. I have already said that he showed me much kindness during his prosperity. Quite recently he had invited me, with some intimate friends, to spend wonderful days at Chéneviáres, his country house close to Andresis, where he had a sporting eſtate. It was there that the sight of a picturesque thatched cottage inspired me with the tale of the "Shepherdess of the Alps." A calm and serene moment of happiness, that was soon to be followed by a violent storm! Everybody hunted except me, but I followed the hunt, and sitting, pencil in hand, at the foot of a pillar on an island in the Seine, I dreamed of the Alps, musing over my ſtory, and guarding the sportsmen's dinner. When they returned, the fresh pure air of the river had given me as voracious an appetite as theirs.

In the evening the table, covered with game they had brought down, adorned with bottles of fine wine, offered a free field for fun and licence. These were for Cury the laſt caresses and deceptions of a faithless prosperity:

Hinc apicem rapax
Fortuna cum ſtridore acuto
Suſtulit.

He had allowed himself some gay trifling at the theatre at Fontainebleau, ridiculing the gentlemen of the bedchamber in one of his prologues, and this had offended them; whilſt pretending to laugh at the joke, they revenged themselves by forcing him to lose the directorship of Menus Plaisirs. The moſt idiotic, the vaineſt and touchieſt of these gentlemen was the Duc d'Aumont. He was determined to ruin Cury, and his principal reason was vanity; that alone made me hate the little duke, but I had a personal grievance againſt him, and this was why:

Madame de Pompadour wished that Rotrou's tragedy "Venceslas" should be cleansed of all the disfiguring coarseness of language and manners, and I, to please her, was willing to undertake this ungrateful task; the actors, having approved the corrections at a reading, were learning and rehearsing the tragedy in order to act it at Versailles, but Lekain, who deteſted me (I have told elsewhere the reason), pretended to adopt the corrections and then treacherously, unknown to me, played his old part. This ſtupefied the other actors, and made them miss their cues in the dialogue and action. I complained of it loudly as a baseness and unbelievable insolence, and finding myself compromised in the controversy amongſt the actors, I went to the *Mercure* to tell the public about Lekain's behaviour and to contradict the rumours circulated by his cabal, when the Duc d'Aumont, who favoured him, imposed silence on me. So I, too, had an exceedingly good reason for hating him! In his misfortune Cury retained all his old comrades of the Menus Plaisirs. One of them to whom I was particularly attached, Gagny, an amateur of French painting and music, and one of the most regular frequenters of the Opéra, had taken a candidate for this theatre as his mistress, and he wanted her début to be in Lully's great parts, beginning with Oriane. He invited Cury, myself, and several other amateurs to spend Christmas at his country house at Garge in order to hear the new Oriane, and give her some lessons. It must be noted too that la Ferté, director of the Menus Plaisirs, and the beautiful Rosetti, his mistress, were also of the party. The good food, fine wine, and charming behaviour of our host made us think Mademoiselle Saint Hilaire's voice admirable. Gagny believed her to be another le Maure, and according to the wine we agreed with him.

Everything was going swimmingly when one morning Cury had a terrible attack of gout. I went to see him at once, and found him in a corner by the fire, both legs swathed, but scribbling on his knee, and laughing like a satyr, which his features resembled. I wanted to speak of his attack, but he made me a sign not to interrupt, and finished writing, his hand all crooked. Then I said to him: "You have suffered a lot, but I see that the pain has gone." "I am still in pain, but laugh none the less. And you will laugh too," he answered. "You know how bitterly the Duc d'Aumont has pursued me? It wouldn't hurt, I think, to revenge myself by a little maliciousness. Here is what I thought of in the night, in spite of the gout." He had already written thirty verses of the famous parody of "Cinna"; he read them to me, and I confess that, finding them very amusing, I told him to continue. "Then let me work," he said, "for I am just in the vein." I left him, and when I descended at the sound of the dinner bell, I found that he had hobbled down, muffled in furs, and before all the guests had gathered together read to la Ferté and

Rosetti what I had heard in the morning and some more that he had added. After this second reading I remembered these mischievous verses easily from beginning to end, aided by my memory of the "Corneille" they parodied, which I knew by heart. Cury went on with his work the following day, and confided all to me, so that I took back to Paris fifty verses well fixed in my mind.

I know that the ball gathers snow as it rolls round, but here is all that I believe to be by the hand of Cury. I must add that there is not a single insult in these lines, and I have seen the most scurrilous in the untrue copies that have so multiplied.

In these copies they took the idea of the parody in general, but altered and disfigured nearly all the details. There are parts, not traceable to "Corneille," that have absolutely evaded the copyists. For instance, in imitating the way of speaking that gained for d'Argental the nickname Gobe-Mouche, they had to put in words without any sense at all, but in these broken phrases there was no subtlety, and not a single resemblance to the part of the parody where d'Argental holds forth.

I went back to Madame Geoffrin and Paris, my head full of this parody, and the very next day I heard people talking about it. They only quoted the two first lines:

Que chacun se retire, et qu'aucun n'entre ici.
Vous, Lekain, demeurez ; vous d'Argental, aussi.

But it was enough to make me believe that it was going round the town, and I couldn't help saying smilingly: "What, is that all you know?" At once they pressed me to tell what I knew; they assured me that there were only honest and reliable people present, and Madame Geoffrin herself answered for the discretion of her small circle of friends. I gave in and recited what I knew of the parody, and the next day I was denounced to the Duc d'Aumont, and by him to the King, as the author of this satire.

I was peacefully at the Opéra listening to our Oriane in the rehearsal of "Amadis," when I was told that all Versailles was up in arms against me; that I was accused of being the author of a satire on the Duc d'Aumont; that the nobility was crying for vengeance, and that the Duc de Choiseul was at the head of my enemies. I returned home immediately and wrote to the Duc d'Aumont to assure him the verses were not by me, and that never having satirised anyone, I would not begin with him. I should have stopped there, but, whilst writing, I remembered that with regard to Venceslas and the lies published against me, that the Duc d'Aumont himself had written to me that one ought to despise such things, and that they would die of their own accord if one took no notice of them. I thought it natural and just to remind him of his maxim, and in that I was foolish. Also my letter was taken as a fresh insult, and the Duc d'Aumont produced it before the King as a proof of the resentment that had dictated the satire. To make fun of him in disowning it, wasn't that to accuse myself? So that my letter only inflamed his and the court's anger. I hastened to Versailles, and wrote from there to the Duc de Choiseul:

"My Lord,

"They tell me that you listen to the voice that accuses me and asks for my disgrace. You are powerful, but just; I am unfortunate, but innocent. I beg you to hear me and judge.

"I am, etc."

For an answer the Duc de Choiseul wrote at the bottom of my letter, "In half an hour," and sent it back. In half an hour I was at his house and was admitted. "You want me to hear you?" he said to me. "I consent. What have you to say?" "That I have done nothing, my lord duke, to deserve the stern welcome I get from you, who have a noble and sensitive mind, and have never enjoyed humiliating the unfortunate." "But, Marmontel, how would you have me receive you, after you have written that unlawful lampoon against the Duc d'Aumont?" "I did not write that satire. I have written and told him so." "Yes, and in your letter inflicted another insult by giving him in his own words the advice he gave you." "As the advice was wise, I thought I could remind him of it. I meant nothing malicious." "Nevertheless it is an impertinence; believe me when I say it." "I felt that after I had sent the letter!" "He is very hurt, and has reason to be." "Yes, I was wrong there, and I reproach myself for the unseemliness. But, my lord duke, is this a crime in your eyes?" "No, but the parody?" "The parody is not mine, I assure you as an honest man." "Did you not repeat it?" "Yes, as much as I knew, and in a society where each one says what he knows, but I didn't allow them to write it down, although they wished very much to copy it." "It is running round, however." "They get it from someone else." "And from whom do you get it?" (I am silent.) "You are the first," he added, "who is said to have repeated it, and in such a way as to betray yourself as the author." "When I said what I knew of it," I answered, "they had already spoken about it and quoted the first lines. As to the way I recited it—that would prove just as well that I had written 'The Misanthrope,' 'Tartuffe' and 'Cinna' too, for I pride myself, my lord duke, on reading all those as if I were their author." "But anyhow, this parody—from whom did you get it? That is what you must say!" "Your pardon, my lord duke, but that is what I must not, and what I will not say." "I'll swear it was from the originator." "Even if it were from the originator, should I name him?" "And how, without that, do you expect us to believe that it isn't yours? Everything points to you. You have a grudge against the Duc d'Aumont; the cause is well known; you wish to be revenged. You wrote this satire, and finding it amusing, you recited it; that is what they say, what is believed, and what they have a right to believe. How can you answer that?" "I answer that such conduct would be that of a fool, an idiot, a wicked imbecile, and the author of the parody is not that at all. Why, my lord, the man who wrote that would not have the simplicity, imprudence or addle-headedness to recite it himself openly in society! No, he would have written a dozen copies, disguising his hand, and sent them to actors, musketeers, to discontented authors. I know as well as any how to guard anonymity, and, had I been guilty, would certainly have hidden behind it. Then will you say to yourself: 'Marmontel, before ten people who were not his intimate friends, recited what he knew of this parody, therefore he was not the author. His letter to the Duc d'Aumont was that of a man who feared nothing, therefore he was sure of his innocence, and thought he had nothing to fear.' This reasoning, my lord, is the reverse of what is said against me, but is just as conclusive. I have committed two indiscretions: the first was to recite the verses that stuck in my memory, the second to do so without the consent of the author." "Then you heard them from the author?" "Yes, the author himself, for I do not wish to lie. It is he whom I have wronged, and that is my chief fault. The other was to write to the Duc d'Aumont in a way that might seem ironical and not respectful enough. I confess these my two sins, but there are no others." "I believe it," he said. "You speak honestly. But you will be sent to the Bastille. See M. de Saint Florentin; he has the King's order." "I will go," I said, "but may I console myself with the thought that you are no longer an enemy?" He graciously promised me that, and I presented myself to the Secretary of State, who had to draw up the order of arrest.

He wished me well; easily believed me to be innocent.

"What can we do?" he said. "The Duc d'Aumont accuses you and insists on your punishment. He demands this satisfaction as a recompense for his and his ancestor's services; the King was happy to grant it. Go and find M. de Sartines. I sent him the King's order, and tell him that you come from me to receive it." I asked if I might take the time beforehand to dine in Paris, and he agreed.

That day I was invited to dine with my neighbour M. de Vaudesir, a man of wit and wisdom, who, under a coarse exterior, nevertheless combined an exquisite knowledge of literature and much amiability and politeness.

His only son was, alas! that unhappy Saint James, who, having madly dissipated the great fortune he left him, died insolvent in the Bastille, where they were sending me.

After dinner I confided my adventure to Vaudesir, who bade me farewell tenderly. From there I went to M. de Sartines, who was not at home; that evening he dined in town and wouldn't be back until six o'clock. It was five; I used the interval to go and forewarn and reassure my good friend Madame Harenc about my misfortune. At six o'clock I returned to the Prefect of Police. He had no instructions as to my affair, or pretended to have none. I told him everything, and he seemed sorry. "When we dined together at Baron Holbach's," he said, "who could have foreseen that the first time I should see you again would be to send you to the Bastille? But I have not received the order. Let us see if it has arrived at my office in my absence." He called his clerks, and they having heard nothing, he said: "Go and sleep at your house and come to-morrow at ten o'clock; that will do just as well."

I needed this evening to arrange the month's *Mercure*. I sent for two friends to sup with me, and whilst waiting, I called on Madame Geoffrin to announce my disgrace. She already knew something, for I found her cold and sad; but although my misfortune came from her circle and she herself was the unwilling cause, I did not touch on that, and I think she was grateful.

The two friends I expected were Suard and Coste; the latter a young Toulousian whom I had known in his own town, the other my closest and chosen friend to the end of my days. He cherished this, my dear illusion, by giving me freely occasions of being useful to him. I should have been offended had he appeared to doubt his full right to make use of me. We passed part of the night together in arranging everything for the next issue of the *Mercure*, and after having slept several hours, I rose, packed up, and betook myself to M. de Sartines, where I found the police officer who was to accompany me. M. de Sartines wanted him to go in a separate carriage to the Bastille; it was I who refused this kind suggestion, and we arrived, my conductor and I, at the Bastille in the same hackney coach. There I was received in the council-chamber by the governor and his staff, and there I began to see that I had been well recommended. The governor, M. Abadie, having read the letters handed to him by the police officer, asked me would I care to be allowed to have a servant, on condition, however, that we shared the same room, and that he only went out of the prison with me. This servant was Bury. I consulted with him, and he replied that he did not wish to leave me. They looked cursorily at my baggage and books, and led me up to a vast room, furnished with two beds, two tables, a low cupboard and three wicker chairs. It was cold, but a gaoler made us a good fire and brought me wood in abundance. At the same time they gave me pens, ink and paper, on condition I rendered an account of how they were used and how much had been given to me.

Whilst I arranged my table to begin writing, the gaoler came to ask if the bed were good enough. After examining it I answered that the mattress was bad and the bed-clothes unclean. In a minute all that was changed. I was also asked at what hour I dined; I answered: "When everyone else does." The Bastille had a library; the governor sent me the catalogue, offering me my choice. I thanked him, but my servant, for his own use, asked for the novels of Prévost, and these were brought to him.

For my part, I had much to save me from boredom. Impatient for a long time with the contempt shown by men of letters for Lucan's poem, which they had not read, and only knew through the barbarous and bombastic version by Brebeuf, I decided to translate it decently and faithfully in prose; and this work, that absorbed me without tiring my head, proved to be the best for the solitary leisure of my prison. I had brought the "Pharsalia" with me, and to understand it better had carefully added "Cæsar's Commentaries."

So behold me in the corner beside a good fire, pondering over the quarrel between Cæsar and Pompey, and forgetting mine with the Duc d'Aumont. Behold Bury, as philosophical as myself, amusing himself by making our beds in two opposite corners of the room, lit at the moment by the light of a lovely winter's day, notwithstanding the bars of the strong iron grill which let me look out on the Faubourg Saint Antoine.

Two hours later the bolts of the two imprisoning doors were drawn, and the noise aroused me from my deep reverie; two gaolers carrying a dinner I thought was mine came in silently. One put in front of the fire three little dishes covered with ordinary earthenware plates; the other spread a rather coarse but white cloth on the vacant table. I saw them place a clean enough service on this table, a pewter spoon and fork, some good household bread and a bottle of wine. This done, the two gaolers retired and the two doors closed with the same sound of locks and bolts.

Bury then invited me to table and served the soup. It was Friday. This maigre soup was a puree of white beans made with the freshest butter, and a dish of these same beans came next. I found all this very good. The dish of cod which he brought me then was still better. The dash of garlic seasoned it with so fine a flavour and smell that it would have pleased the taste of the greediest Gascon. The wine was not good, but it was passable; no dessert. Well, one must forego something ! After all I discovered one dined extremely well in prison ! As I rose from the table and Bury took my place (for there was still enough for him in what remained), behold my two gaolers re-entering with pyramids of fresh dishes in their hands. At the sight of this dinner-service of beautiful linen, fine crockery, silver spoon and fork, we discovered our mistake, but we made no sign; and when our gaolers had gone, after putting everything down, Bury said to me: " Sir, as you have just eaten my dinner, don't you think I ought to eat yours ?" " Quite right," I replied. And I think the walls of our room were very astonished to hear our laughter.

His dinner was not maigre. These are the items: an excellent soup, a succulent slice of beef, a boiled leg of capon dripping with fat and melting, a small plate of fried artichokes, some spinach, a very fine winter pear, some fresh grapes, a bottle of old Burgundy and the best Mocha coffee. This was Bury's dinner, all except the fruit and the coffee, which he kept for me.

After dinner the governor came to see me and asked if I were well fed, assuring me that it was from his table, that he took care to carve for me, and that no one else should touch it. He suggested a fowl for my supper; I thanked him and said that the remainder of the fruit sufficed. That was my usual dinner in the Bastille, and you can deduce from that with what gentleness, or rather with what repugnance, they lent themselves to serve the anger of the Duc d'Aumont.

The governor visited me every day. As he had a smattering of polite literature, and even of Latin, it amused him to follow my work; he enjoyed it, but depriving himself soon of the little diversion he would say: "Good-bye, I must go and console people who are more unfortunate than you." The consideration he had for me may well have been no proof of humanity, but I have further very faithful testimony of it. One of the gaolers became friendly with my servant, and soon was at his ease with me. One day, when I spoke of M. Abadie's sensitive and compassionate nature, he said: "Oh, he is the best of men. He only accepted this position, which is painful to him, in order to alleviate the fate of the prisoners. He succeeded a hard, avaricious man, who treated them very badly, so that when he died and this man took his place, the change was felt even in the dungeons; you would have said" (strange expression from the lips of a gaoler), "you would have said that the sun's rays had at last penetrated to these dungeons. The people to whom we are forbidden to speak of what goes on outside, asked us, 'What has happened?' Well, sir, you see how your servant is fed? Our prisoners have almost as good, and the relief it is in his power to give them relieves him, for he suffers when they suffer."

It is not necessary to tell you that this man was himself a fine creature for his position, and I was extremely careful not to disgust him with this position —where compassion is so rare and precious.

The way in which they treated me at the Bastille made me think that I would not be there long; and my work, interspersed with interesting reading (for I had Montaigne, Horace and la Bruyère with me), left me few tedious moments. One thing alone plunged me into melancholy sometimes: the walls of my room were covered with inscriptions whose character showed the dark, sad, reflections obsessing the unfortunates who had been in this prison before me. I thought I saw them still wandering and groaning, and their shadows surrounded me.

But a more personal subject tormented my mind most cruelly. Whilst speaking of Madame Harenc's acquaintances, I have not mentioned a splendid fellow called Durant, who was a friend of mine, but was not remarkable otherwise except for a great simplicity of manners. Now one morning, the ninth day of my captivity, the major of the Bastille entered, and without preamble asked me seriously and coldly if a man called Durant was known to me. I replied that I did know a man of that name. Then, sitting down to write, he continued his interrogation. The age, figure, and face of this Durant, his position and dwelling: since when had I known him, at which house, nothing was forgotten, and each answer the major wrote down with a face of marble. Lastly, having read me his questions, he presented me with the pen to sign it. I signed it and he retired.

Scarcely had he gone when all the most sinister possibilities seized my imagination. What has he done, this good fellow Durant? He goes each morning to the café, he will have defended me, he will have spoken too heatedly against the Duc d'Aumont, he will have poured out murmurs against the partial, unjust authority that overwhelms innocent weak men to please the powerful. Because of these imprudent speeches they will arrest him, and through me, and for my sake, he will groan in an imprisonment more rigorous than mine. Weak as he is, older and more timid than I, grief will seize and master him. I shall be the cause of his death. And poor Madame Harenc and all her friends, what a state they will be in! God, what misfortunes my imprudence has caused! Thus it is that brooding exaggerates evil omens in the mind of a captive, solitary and isolated, in the clutch of absolute power, and steeps his soul in dark foreboding. From that moment I had no more sound sleep. All the food that the governor took such care to keep for me was soaked in bitterness. I felt as if I had a wound in my liver, and had my detention in the Bastille lasted eight days longer it would have been my tomb.

In these circumstances I received a letter that M. de Sartines allowed to reach me. It was from Mademoiselle S——, a young, beautiful and interesting lady with whom I was in love just before my disgrace. In this letter she showed most touchingly how tenderly and sincerely she sympathised with me in my misfortune, assuring me that her courage was not dismayed, and that, instead of weakening her feelings for me, it had made them deeper and more constant.

First of all I replied expressing all my appreciation of such generous friendship, but I added that the principal lesson I had learned from misfortune, was never to associate anyone with the unforeseen dangers and sudden revolutions that the perilous position of a writer exposed me to; that if in this situation I possessed some courage, it was due to my isolation; that I would have gone out of my mind if I had left a woman and children in misery outside my prison; that at least on that score, which was the most vital to me, I would not leave hostages to fortune.

Mademoiselle S—— was more hurt than comforted by my reply, and shortly afterwards consoled herself by marrying M. S——

At length, on the eleventh day of my confinement, at nightfall, the governor came to announce that I had been liberated, and the same police officer who brought me took me again to M. de Sartines. This magistrate showed joy at seeing me once more, but a joy mingled with sadness. "Sir," I said to him, "there is something in your kindness, grateful as I am, that hurts me; whilst wishing me joy you seem to pity me. Have you yet another misfortune to announce?" (I was thinking of Durant.) "Yes, alas! had you no suspicion of it? The King deprives you of the *Mercure*." These words relieved me, and, nodding my head resignedly, I answered: "So much the worse for the *Mercure*!" "Perhaps the evil can be remedied," he added. "M. de Saint Florentin is in Paris; he is interested in you; go and see him to-morrow."

On leaving M. de Sartines I flew to Madame Harenc, impatient to see Durant. I found him there; and in the midst of all the exclamations of joy I saw only him. "Oh, there you are!" I said, falling on his neck. "How relieved I am!" This transport at the sight of a man for whom I had never had any ardent feeling astonished everyone. They thought the Bastille had turned my head. "Ah, my friend, you are free!"

said Madame Harenc, kissing me. "How happy I am! And the *Mercure*?" "The *Mercure* is loſt," I said to her. "But, madame, allow me to find out about this unfortunate man. What has he done to give me so much grief?" I told them about the major. It appears that Durant had been to M. de Sartines to beg for permission to see me, that he had said he was my friend. M. de Sartines had ordered them to ask me who was this Durant, and out of that simple queſtion the major had manufactured an examination. Enlightened and at ease on this point, I used my courage to rouse hope in my friends, and after receiving a thousand tokens of the moſt loving intereſt from them, I went to see Madame Geoffrin.

"Well, there you are!" she said. "God be praised! the King has taken the *Mercure* out of your hands. The Duc d'Aumont is *so* pleased; that will teach you to write letters!" "And to recite verses," I added, smiling. She asked if I were going to commit some other folly. "No, madame, but I am going to try and remedy those I have committed." As she was really upset by my bad luck, it was necessary for her, to be soothed, to quarrel with me over it. "Why had I written those verses?" "I did not write them," I said. "Then, why did you repeat them?" "Because you inſiſted." "And did I know that it was such a pointed satire? And you, who underſtood, why muſt you boaſt of knowing them? What madness! And then your friends, de Presle and Vaudesir, go about publishing the fact that you are sent to the Baſtille on parole with all sorts of consideration and reſpect!" "But how, madame, muſt everyone believe that I was dragged there like a criminal?" "One muſt be quiet and not snap one's fingers at these people. Maréchal de Richelieu can say that he has twice been led to the Baſtille like a guilty person, and that it is very ſtrange you should be treated better than he was." "Well then, madame, behold an object worthy of the Maréchal's envy!" "Oh, yes, sir, they are offended at consideration shown to those who have insulted them, and use all their influence to be revenged; that is natural. You don't want them to let themselves be fleeced, do you?" "What sheep!" I exclaimed to myself rather mockingly, but soon, seeing that my replies irritated her, I grew silent. At last, when she had said all that was on her mind, I rose modestly and bade her good-night.

The next morning I was hardly awake when Bury, entering my room, announced Madame Geoffrin. "Well, neighbour, what sort of night have you had?" "A very good one, madame; neither the noise of bolts, not the 'Who goes there?' of the patrol, disturbed my sleep." "And I," she said, "have not shut my eyes!" "But why, madame?" "Ah, why? You don't know? I was unjust and cruel. Yesterday evening I hurled reproaches at you. But that's me! As soon as a man is in trouble, I fall on him and accuse him of all sorts of crimes" (and she began to cry). "Oh, heavens, madame," I said, "are you still thinking of that? I have forgotten it. If I remember, it will always be only a mark of your kindness to me. Everyone has his own way of loving; yours is to scold your friends for the evil that happens to them, as a mother scolds her child for falling." These words comforted her. She asked me what I was going to do. "I am going to follow M. de Sartines' advice—to go and see M. de Saint Florentin, and from there to Versailles, and approach Madame de Pompadour and the Duc de Choiseul, if possible. But I will be cool and keep my head; I will behave well; don't be uneasy about that." Such was the interview, and it does as much honour to Madame Geoffrin's character as any of the kind actions of her life.

M. de Saint Florentin seemed sorry for me. He had done for me all that his feebleness and timidity allowed him, but neither Madame de Pompadour nor M. de Choiseul had seconded him. Without explaining this, he approved of my visiting them both, and I went to Versailles.

Madame de Pompadour, to whom I presented myself first, told me through Quesnay that, in the present circumstances, she could not see me. I was not surprised; I had no right to think that she would make powerful enemies for my sake.

The Duc de Choiseul received me but to overwhelm me with reproaches. "It is very regrettable," he said to me, "that I see you still in misfortune, but you have done everything you could to bring it on yourself; and you aggravate your faults so terribly by imprudence that those who are most anxious to help you are obliged to abandon you." "What have I done, my lord duke; what could I have done between four walls that makes me more guilty than what I have confessed to you?" "Firstly," he replied, "the very day you had to go to the Bastille, you went to the Opéra and boasted insultingly that your dismissal to the Bastille was a joke, a vain complaisance to oblige a duke and peer, against whom you have continually inveighed in the foyer of the Comédie, written the most damaging letters to the army, and finally against whom, not by yourself, but in society, you wrote the parody of 'Cinna,' at supper with Mademoiselle Clairon, Count Valbelle, Abbé Galiani, and other gay companions; and this is what you did not tell me, and what is well known.

While he was speaking I gathered myself together, and when he finished, I spoke in my turn. "My lord duke, your favour is dear to me, your esteem is even more precious to me than your kindness, but I consent to lose your favour and esteem if there is one word of truth in these reports." "What!" he said with a start, "not a word of truth in what I have just said?" "Not one, and I beg you to let me sign at your desk my answer to each point.

"The day I was ordered to the Bastille I had certainly no desire to go to the Opéra." And after having accounted for my time after I left him, "Send and find out," I added, "from M. de Sartines and Madame Harenc the hours I was with them; these were precisely the time of the performance.

"As to the foyers of the Comédie, by some chance I have not set foot in it for six months. The last time I was there (and I have the date in my mind) was the first performance of 'Duranci,' and before that, even, I defy anyone to cite one evil speech of mine against the Duc d'Aumont.

"By an equally lucky chance, I find, my lord duke, that since the beginning of military operations I have not written to the army, and if they can produce a letter or note from me, then I am dishonoured.

"With regard to the parody, it is quite false to say it was made at supper or in Mademoiselle Clairon's company. I can even prove that at her house I have not heard a single line of this parody; and if since it has become known they have spoken of it there, as is possible, it was not before me.

"There, my lord, are four assertions I will write and sign at your desk if you will allow me, and certainly not a living soul can prove the contrary, nor dare venture to face me with it and before you."

You can well imagine that the duke became less vehement whilst listening to me. "Marmontel, I see that I have been deceived. Your manner of speaking leaves me no doubt as to your good faith; only truth would dare use such language, but I must myself be able to state that the parody is not by you. Tell me who is the author and the *Mercure* will be given back to you." "It cannot be restored at such a price, my lord." "Why not?" "Because I prefer your respect to fifteen thousand livres income." "Faith!" he said, "as the author has not the honesty to make himself known, I do not know why you are so circumspect." "Why, my lord duke? Because after having abused his confidence so carelessly, it would be the depth of disgrace to betray him. I have been indiscreet, but I will not be perfidious. He did not confide his verses to me in order to publish them. My memory stole them, and if this theft is punishable, I ought to be punished: heaven forbid he declares himself or is known! I should then be very guilty. I should have caused his misfortune, and would die of grief. But at present what is my crime? To have done what everyone does without any concealment. And you, my lord, permit me to ask if you have never in society repeated an epigram, or amusing verses, or a malicious couplet, that you have heard? Who, before me, has ever been punished for it? The 'Philippics,' as you know, was a diabolical work. The Regent, the second person in the kingdom, was slandered in it atrociously, and this infamous work was on everyone's lips; it was written and dictated, thousands of copies were made, and yet who beside the author was punished? I knew the verses, I recited them, I allowed no copies to be made, and the sole crime of these verses is to make fun of the Duc d'Aumont's vanity. In two words that is the cause in question. If it were about a plot against the King's life, or an outrage, they would be right to compel me to denounce the author; but really it is not worth while burdening myself with the infamous rôle of informer for the sake of a joke; it affects not only my fortune but my life that I should say with Nicomède:

"*The master who formed so carefully my youth*
Has taught me how to speak untruth."

I perceived that the Duc de Choiseul found something ridiculous in my little pride; and to make me feel this he asked smilingly who had been my Annibal? "My Annibal, my lord, was Misery, which for long has tried me and taught me how to suffer."

"Well, you are what I call an honest man," he replied. Then seeing him waver, I said: "An honest man who is ruined and oppressed to please the Duc d'Aumont without any other reason but his complaint, or other proof than his word. What appalling tyranny!" Here the duke stopped me. "Marmontel, the grant of the *Mercure* is a favour from the King; he can take that away when he pleases; there is no tyranny there." "My lord duke," I replied, "as from the King to me, the grant of the *Mercure* is a favour, but between the Duc d'Aumont and myself the *Mercure* is my living, and he has no right to deprive me of it by a false accusation. . . . But it is not I who is plundered, it is not I who is sacrificed for revenge; to gratify it they slaughter the most innocent victims. Know, my lord duke, that from the age of sixteen, having lost my father, and being surrounded by orphans like myself, a large poverty-stricken family, I promised them all a father's care and to act always as their father. I called heaven and nature to be my witness, and from that moment to this, I have kept my promise. I live on little; I know how to reduce my needs and expenses; but this crowd of unfortunates who exist on the fruits of my work: these two sisters whom I have just established and portioned; these women who require some ease in their old age; my mother's sister, a widow, poor and burdened with children, what will become of them? I have led them to hope for comfort; already they feel the effect of my fortune, the benefit which was the source of this must not be exhausted; and suddenly they will hear. . . .

Ah, it is there the Duc d'Aumont must go to savour his vengeance, there he will hear their cries and see their tears. Let him go and count his unhappy victims; let him drink his fill of the tears of infancy and age, and insult the miserable whose bread he snatches. There is his triumph! He has asked for this, they tell me, as a reward for his services; he should have said for his wages, he has some there worthy of his heart." At these words my tears fell, and the duke, as much moved as I, embraced me and said: "You pierce my soul, my dear Marmontel; perhaps I have done you grievous wrong, but I will repair it." Then taking his pen, and with his accustomed vigour, he wrote to the Abbé Barthelemy: "My dear Abbé, the King has given you the *Mercure*; but I have just seen and heard Marmontel; he has moved me, and convinced me of his innocence. It would not do for you to accept the property of an innocent man; refuse the *Mercure*; I will compensate you." He wrote to M. de Saint Florentin: "You have received the King's command, my dear colleague, to remit the grant of the *Mercure*; but I have seen Marmontel and I want to speak to you about him. Do not hurry on anything we have not discussed." He read these two letters to me, sealed and despatched them, and told me to go and see Madame de Pompadour, giving me a note for her which he did not read, but which was very favourable to me, for I was admitted to her as soon as she had glanced at it.

Madame de Pompadour was unwell and in bed. I approached; I had first to endure the same reproaches that the Duc de Choiseul had made me, and with greater gentleness I made the same responses. Afterwards, "You see then," I said to her, "what fresh wrongs they invent, so that after eleven days in prison the King carries his severity so far as to pronounce my ruin! Had I been free, perhaps I might have managed to reach you. I would have given the lie to these falsehoods, and avowing my one real fault, have found grace in your eyes. But they began by contriving to have me shut up between four walls; they profit by this time of captivity to slander me with impunity; and my prison doors only open to show the abyss that yawns before my feet. But it is not enough to drag me and my unfortunate family there; they know that a helping hand can succour us; they fear that this hand from which we have received so many benefits will support us again; they remove this, our last and only hope, and because the pride of the Duc d'Aumont is irritated, a host of innocent people must be deprived of all consolation. Yes, madame, that is the aim of these lies, to turn you against me by making me appear a rogue and a fool in your mind. Above all that is my weak spot, and my enemies knew how to pierce my heart through it.

"Now, to render me defenceless, they insist that I name the author of the parody which I knew and repeated. They know me well enough to be perfectly sure that I will never divulge it; not to accuse him is to condemn myself, they say; if I refuse to be infamous I am lost. Certainly, if I can only save myself at that price, then my fate is quite decided. But since when, madame, has it been a crime to be honourable? Since when has the accused to prove his innocence, and since when can the accuser dispense with his proofs? I am willing, however, to repel with proofs an attack which has none, and my proofs are my writings, my character, which is known to many, and my conduct. Since I have had the misfortune to be included amongst men of letters, the writers of satires have been my enemies; there is no insolence I have not endured patiently from them. I hear quoted as mine an epigram, a cutting sketch, or a sarcasm, and at last a mocking satire such as this, and I have to consent to it being imputed to me. But if I disdain these petty revenges, if my decent, moderate pen has never been dipped in gall, why, on the word of a man blinded with rage, do they believe that my pen would begin by distilling its first poison against him? I am slandered, madame, before you and before the King, whose goodness would not allow him to believe they would deceive him, and but for the generous pity of the Duc de Choiseul, neither you nor the King would ever have known the calumny."

I had scarcely finished when the Duc de Choiseul was announced. He had lost no time, for he was dressing when I left him. "Well, madame," he said, "you have heard? What do you think of how he has suffered?" "I think it is horrible," she answered, "and the *Mercure* must be his once more." "I agree," said the duke. "But," she added, "it is not seemly that the King appears to go from one extreme to the other in one day. The Duc d'Aumont must make some step." "Oh, madame," I cried, "that decides my arrest! He will certainly not take the step you wish!" "He will," she insisted. "M. de Saint-Florentin is with the King, he will come to see me and I will speak to him. Go and wait for him at his house."

The old minister was as ill-content as I with the expedient weakly adopted by Madame de Pompadour, and he did not disguise from me that he thought it a bad omen. Indeed, the Duc d'Aumont was unmanageable in his stubborn pride. Neither his friend, Count d'Angevilliers, nor Bouvart, his doctor, nor his comrade the Duc de Duras, could inspire him with the smallest generosity. As there was nothing to respect in him, he intended at least to be feared, and he returned to court only too determined not to weaken, declaring that anyone who spoke to him of a move in my favour, he would regard as an enemy.

Not one of them dared stand up to one of the men nearest the King, and all the interest taken in me resulted in obtaining a pension of a thousand crowns from the *Mercure*. The Abbé Barthelemy refused the grant, and it was given to a man called Lagarde, librarian to Madame de Pompadour and worthy protégé of Colin her steward.

SEVENTH BOOK

I HAVE observed more than once, and in the most critical circumstances, that when fortune seems to go against me, she is working better for me than I could myself desire. Here you behold me ruined, and in the midst of my ruin you will see the beginning of the most untroubled, peaceful, equable happiness that a man of my state could hope to enjoy. To establish it solidly, and on a true basis—that is to say, on a calm mind and soul—I began by freeing myself from domestic anxieties. Age or illness, especially the one that seems contagious in my family, diminished one by one the number of dear relatives that it gave me such pleasure to keep from want. I had already persuaded my aunts to stop their business, and after having liquidated our debts, I paid their pensions out of the income from my little property. Now these pensions, each of a hundred écus, being reduced to five in number, there remained for me—first, the pension of a thousand crowns from the *Mercure*; I had, further, the five hundred livres interest on the ten thousand francs I had used as surety for M. Odde; add to this an income of five hundred and forty livres from the Duc d'Orléans, and then with the surplus of the funds at the *Mercure* office, I purchased some royal bills of exchange. Thus for my rent, my servant, and myself, I had just less than a thousand crowns. I had never spent more. Madame Geoffrin wanted me to stop even paying at that time for my lodgings, but I begged her to let me try if my own wits could support me for a year, assuring her that, should the rent pinch me, I would confess it to her unblushingly; I was not put to that pain. Most sadly the number of pensions I paid decreased by the death of my two sisters, who were at the Convent of Clermont; they were taken from me by the same illness that killed our father and mother. Shortly afterwards I lost my two old aunts—all that remained of my home. Death left me only my mother's sister—the aunt at Albois, who is still alive. In this way I inherited each year one or other of my own charities. On the other hand, the first editions of my "Contes" began to bring me money.

I was tranquillised about money; my sole ambition was the French Academy, and even this ambition was moderate and placid. Having attained my fortieth year, I had still three years to give to work, and in three years I would have acquired fresh claims to a place. My translation of Lucan progressed; at the same time I prepared material for my "Treatise on Poetry," and the fame of my "Tales" grew with each new edition. So I believed I could be happy.

You have seen how kindly the obliging Bouret started off with me. The acquaintanceship begun, the connection established, his social life became mine. In one of the "Tales told in the Evening" I describe the character of one of his most intimate friends, the beautiful Madame Gaulard. One of her sons, a charming man, held the office of General Receivorship of Farms at Bordeaux; he was visiting Paris, and on the eve of his departure, one of the loveliest days of the year, we were dining together at our friend Bouret's in good company. The magnificence of this house, which the arts themselves had decorated, the sumptuousness of the food, the budding verdure of the gardens, the serenity of a clear sky, and above all the charm of a host who, when with his guests, seemed the lover of each woman and the best friend of each man—in a word, all that could spread good humour at a feast had exalted our spirits. I, feeling myself the freest and most independent of men, was like an escaped bird, springing up joyfully into the air, and to make no pretence, the excellent wine helped to give my soul and thoughts power to soar.

In the middle of this gaiety, Madame Gaulard's young son bade us farewell; and, speaking to me of Bordeaux, he asked could he do anything for me there? "Just welcome me there," I said to him, "when I go to see that beautiful port and rich city; for in my dreams that is one of my most interesting plans." "Had I known, you would have fulfilled it to-morrow," he said. "I can give you a seat in my carriage." "And I can carry your luggage," said one of the guests (it was a Jew called Gradis, one of the richest merchants of Bordeaux). "My trunks would not be heavy," I replied, "but what about my return to Paris?" "In six weeks," answered Gaulard, "I will bring you back again." "Is all this possible now?" I asked them. "Very possible as far as we are concerned," they said. "But we leave to-morrow." Then whispering four words to the faithful Bury, who attended me at table, I sent him to pack my baggage, and immediately drank to the health of my travelling companions, saying: "You see, I am ready! We leave to-morrow!" Everyone applauded my brisk decision, and toasted us. It would be difficult to imagine a pleasanter journey; a superb road, weather so lovely and so fine that we travelled by night, sleeping with the windows down. Everywhere the superintendents and collectors of the estates rushed to welcome us; I thought I was in that lyrical age and wonderful climate where hospitality was just a festival.

At Bordeaux I was received and treated as well as anyone could be—that is to say, I was given splendid dinners, excellent wines, and even a salute of cannon from the ships I visited. But although there were people of intellect in this city who might have been charming, I enjoyed their companionship less than I should have liked. They were possessed by a fury for a calamitous game of dice, which absorbed them completely and shadowed their minds. Every day I was saddened by seeing somebody heart-broken by his losses. It seemed they could not dine or sup together without cutting each other's throats directly they rose from the table; and this fierce avarice mixed up with social pleasures and affections was for me a monstrous thing.

Nothing could have been more dangerous for a receveur général des fermes than such society. However sound his bank, the simple fact of his responsibility forbade him games of chance as a rock to wreck his trustworthiness, and the confidence placed in him; and I was useful to him in steadying him in his resolution never to let the evil example gain on him. There was another reason for spoiling the pleasure of my sojourn in Bordeaux: the naval war made deep gaps in the commerce of this great town. I saw the beautiful canal before me in ruins; but I could easily form an idea of how flourishing and prosperous it ought to have been in a state of peace.

Several traders' houses where there was no gaming were the ones I frequented most, and which suited me best. But not one had the attraction for me that Ansely's had. This merchant was an English philosopher of a most admirable character. His son, although quite young, promised to be a fine man, and his two daughters, without being beautiful, had a natural charm of mind and manner that drew me to them as much, or more, than beauty. The younger of the two, Jenny, made a deep impression on my mind. It was for her I wrote the romance of "Petrarch," and I sang it to her as a farewell.

When Gaulard and I were on the point of returning to Paris, he said to me: " Shall we go back by the same road ? Wouldn't you rather make a tour by Toulouse, Montpelier, Nîmes, Avignon, Vaucluse, Aix, Marseilles, Toulon, Lyon and Geneva, where we could see Voltaire, who knew my father ?" You may be sure I greeted this delightful plan with joy; and before leaving I wrote to Voltaire.

At Toulouse we were received by an intimate friend of Madame Gaulard, M. de Saint Amand, a man with the sincerity and good breeding of former days, and who had a very good post in that town. As for me, I did not find one of my acquaintances. I had even trouble to recognise the city, everything seemed to to have shrunk so in comparison with Paris.

From Toulouse to Béziers we were occupied in following and observing the Languedoc canal.

At Béziers I found an old soldier friend of mine, M. de la Sablière, who, after having long enjoyed the life of Paris, had come to grow old in his natal town, and there to enjoy the reward of his services. He received us in the luxurious refuge he had made for himself, with a Gascon gaiety heightened by the comfort of a well-merited fortune, a free and calm state of mind, a taste for reading, some antique philosophy, and the celebrated healthiness of Béziers air. He asked me for news of la Poplinière, at whose house we had passed wonderful days. " Alas !" I answered, " we see him no more; his fatal egoism has made him forget friendship."

We recalled the happy time when la Poplinière was a charming host, and the many animated scenes and characters we had seen at his house. " I like to remember it still," he said. " But as a dream from which one wakes without regret."

Montpelier offered us nothing of interest except the Botanical Gardens; and to us it was merely an agreeable walk, for one was as ignorant as the other of botany; but we were good judges of pretty women, and we had the pleasure of following with our eyes several whose brunette complexions were very attractive. What was distinctive in them was their lively manner, nimble walk, and provocative eyes. I noticed especially that they were exceedingly well shod, which is a good omen in all countries.

At Nîmes, on the evidence of travellers and artists, we expected to be struck with admiration, but nothing astonished us. There are some things whose grandeur and beauty are so exaggerated by fame, that one's wonder is bound to decrease when they are seen close to. The Amphitheatre did not seem enormous to us, and all that surprised us in the structure was its massive heaviness. La Maison Carré pleased us, but it was the pleasure in a small thing symmetrically wrought.

I don't want to forget that at Nîmes, in the study of a naturalist called Séguier, we saw a collection of grey stones, split in layers like talc, showing the two halves of an encrusted fish, the head very distinct; and this was not marvellous, but what was so for me, was that the naturalist assured me that these stones had been found in the Alps, and that the species of fish imprisoned in them are no longer found in our seas. Quærite quos agitat mundi labor (Lucan).

We only saw Avignon in passing, so as to be enraptured by Vaucluse. But I must here again refute the idea that we had the enchanted sojourn of Petrarch and Laura. Vaucluse is the same as Castalia, Peneus and Simoïs. Their fame is due to the Muses, their real charm is in the lines that celebrate them. It is not that the fountain of Vaucluse is not beautiful in the volume of its waters, and the long leaps it makes amongst the rocks that break its fall, but with all due deference to the poets who have described it, the source is totally devoid of natural beauty, the two sides are bare, arid and steep, without shade; it is only at the foot of the cascade that the river formed by it begins to clothe its banks with gay greenery. However, before leaving the water's spring we sat down and dreamed, and, without speaking, our eyes fixed on the ruins that seemed to us to be the remains of Petrarch's castle, we had for some moments the poetic illusion that we saw, wandering by the ruins, the shades of the two lovers who had made the glory of these banks.

But what genuinely delighted the eye were the surroundings and exterior of a little town encircled by the River Vaucluse, the water coming right up to its walls; because of this it is called the Island. We did, in fact, think we saw an enchanted island, whilst walking in the vicinity, under two rows of mulberry trees and between two rapid streams of fresh water. Groups of pretty young Jewesses, who were also promenading, adding to the illusion of enchantment that the beauty of the place possessed; and then some excellent trout and crayfish, served to us as our supper, at the inn where we finished this charming walk, made delights of a different sense succeed those of sight and imagination. The lovely weather, which had accompanied us on our journey since leaving Paris, abandoned us on the frontier of Provence. In the country where it rains the least, for us it poured. At first we only passed through Aix on our way to Marseilles and Toulon; however, we had to pay the customary visit to the governor of the province who lived in that town. This governor, the worthless son of Maréchal de Villars, received me with a politeness that would have flattered me in another. He showed great eagerness to keep us until the fête of Corpus Christi. We refused, but he made us promise that we would return on the eve of the fête, to see the procession of King Réné on the following day.

Those two celebrated ports, Marseilles in commerce and Toulon in war, were to me two objects of lively interest and avid attention, and although at Marseilles the new town, so magnificently built, was worthy of our notice, the little time we had was spent in visiting the harbour, the fortifications, the shops and all the huge trades that had languished through the war, but which would flourish again in peace. At Toulon the harbour was similarly the sole object of our thoughts. We recognised the hand of Louis the Fourteenth in these superb constructions; they bore the imprint of his greatness, whether in the building or the armament of vessels, and recalled his formidable power.

Here, what ought to have impressed me the most astonished me the least. One of my desires was to see the open sea. I saw it only when it was calm, and Vernet's pictures are such a faithful representation, that the reality gave me no emotion; my eyes were as accustomed to it as if I had been born on its shores.

The Duc de Villars seemed to wish to let us see the gala he was giving at his house on the eve of Corpus Christi. And arriving there in the evening, we found all the best company in the town, a ball, a wonderful entertainment and a wonderful supper.

The next day the bad weather deprived us of seeing the so much vaunted procession. We got, nevertheless, several specimens: for instance, a drunken street-porter representing the Queen of Sheba, another King Solomon; three others the wise kings from the East; and all up to their ears in dirt, but the Queen of Sheba, for all that, kept time in her dancing, and King Solomon bounded after her. I admired the seriousness of the Provençals at this spectacle, and we took great pains to imitate them, but sometimes I was hard put not to laugh. I noticed one person who had a white rag at the end of a long pole, and behind him three other scamps who acted like drunkards whenever the man with the rag-banner reversed his pole. I asked what mystery this was representing. "Don't you see," answered the worthy to whom I had spoken, "that they are the three wise kings led by the star, and they stray from the way if the star disappears?" I controlled myself. Nothing kills laughter like the fear of being stoned! The governor had exacted a promise from us not to leave on the day following this fête until after dining with him. He prided himself on assembling people of note to this dinner—M. de Monclar at their head. I already knew the fame of this great judge, and showed my esteem with an ingenuousness that had nothing to do with flattery; he seemed to feel this and responded with kindness. As we rose from the table I took leave of the Duc de Villars, as grateful as one can be for the attentions and cordiality of a man one does not respect.

On our road from Aix to Lyon there was nothing remarkable save the honesty of the hostess of Tain, a village close to the Hermitage, which is celebrated for its wines. While our horses were being changed at this village, I said to the hostess, giving her a golden louis: "Madame, if you have some good red wine of the Hermitage, give me six bottles and pay for them out of this louis." She looked at me as if pleased by my confidence. "I have no good red wine at all, but I have the best of white." I relied on her word, and this wine, for which she only took fifty sous a bottle, was nothing less than nectar.

Anxious to get to Geneva, we hardly gave ourselves time to see Lyon, reserving for our return the pleasure of admiring this huge, luxurious workshop of the masterpieces of industry.

Nothing was more unusual or original than the welcome Voltaire gave us. He was in bed when we arrived. He held out his arms; he cried with joy when he embraced me; he kissed the son of his old friend, M. Gaulard, as well. "I am dying," he said; "have you come to give me life or to receive my last breath?" My comrade was frightened at this opening, but I, who had heard Voltaire say a hundred times he was dying, made a sign to Gaulard to reassure him. As a matter of fact, the next moment the dying man made us sit down beside his bed. "My friend," he said to me, "how happy I am to see you! Particularly as at this moment I have a man with me you will love to hear. It is M. de l'Ecluse, the surgeon-dentist of the late King of Poland, now master of an estate near Montargis, who came to repair the irreparable teeth of Madame Denis. He is a charming man! But don't you know him?" "The only l'Ecluse I know is an actor from the old Opéra Comique." "It is he, my friend. It is he himself. If you know him you have heard the song from the 'Scissor-Grinder' which he acts and sings so well." And at once Voltaire began imitating l'Ecluse, with his bare arms and sepulchral voice, acting the Scissor-Grinder and singing the song:

Je ne sais où la mettre
Ma jeune fillette;
Je ne sais où la mettre
Car on me la che. . . .

We shouted with laughter, but he, perfectly serious, said: "I imitate him badly; you must hear M. de l'Ecluse. And his song in the 'Spinster,' and in the 'Postillon,' and the quarrel of the Hucksters with Vadé! They are reality itself. Oh, you will enjoy it.

Go and see Madame Denis. I, ill as I am, will get up in order to dine with you. We will eat *un ombre-chevalier* and liſten to M. de l'Ecluse. The pleasure of seeing you has put off my illness, and I feel quite reſtored again."

Madame Denis received us with the cordiality that made her so charming. She introduced M. de l'Ecluse, and at dinner Voltaire urged him with praise and flattery to let us have the pleasure of hearing him. He displayed all his talents, and we appeared to be enchanted—we had to—for Voltaire would never have forgiven half-hearted applause.

The walk in the gardens was devoted to speaking of Paris, the *Mercure*, the Baſtille (about which I only said two words), the theatre, the Encyclopedia, and the unfortunate le Franc, whom he ſtill harried; his doctor had ordered him to hunt de Pompignan for two hours every morning for exercise, he said. He charged me to assure our friends that every day they would receive some new quip. He kept his promise.

Returning from the walk he played several games of chess with M. Gaulard, who respectfully let him win. Then he began to speak again of the theatre, and the revolution Mademoiselle Clairon had made in it. "So it is really something prodigious," he said, "the change in her work?" "It is a new talent," I answered; "it is art in perfection, or rather nature herself beautified by the imagination." Then exalting my mind and expression so as to make him underſtand to what a degree she was true, and sublimely true, to the character of her parts, Camille, Roxane, Hermione, Ariane, and especially Electra, I exhauſted the little eloquence I had to inspire him with the enthusiasm that I had for Clairon; and, whilſt speaking, I was overjoyed to see the feeling I roused in him. "Splendid, my friend!" he said delightedly; "so it is with Madame Denis; she has made aſtonishing, unbelievable progress. I wish you could see her act Zaïre, Alzire, Idamé! Skill can go no further!" Madame Denis acting Zaïre! Madame Denis compared with Clairon! I came crashing down from my heights! So it is true that taste can accommodate itself to what it has to enjoy. And the wise maxim:

If one has not what one loves
One must love what one has,

is, in fact, not only nature's lesson, but a means for procuring us pleasure.

We walked again, and whilst M. de Voltaire entertained himself with M. Gaulard over his old friendship with the young man's father, I spoke with Madame Denis, recalling happy times.

In the evening I started Voltaire on the subject of the King of Prussia. He spoke of him with a kind of cold magnanimity, as a man who disdained a too-easy vengeance, or as a disillusioned lover pardons a mistress he has left the outburst of rancour and rage she caused.

The conversation during supper revolved round the writers he most admired, and of that number it was easy for me to distinguish those he loved from the bottom of his heart. They were not those who boasted most of being in his favour. Before going to bed he read us two new cantos from "La Pucelle"; and Madame Denis told us it was the only day since he had been at Délices that he had spent without retiring to his study.

The next day we were discreet enough to leave him alone at least part of the morning, and we sent word that we would wait until he rang. He was to be seen at eleven o'clock. He was still in bed. "Young man," he said to me, "I hope you have not renounced poetry; let us see some of your latest work. I will tell you all I can. Each must have his turn."

I was more timid than I had ever been before him; whether it was that I had lost the naïve confidence of first youth, or whether I felt more than ever how difficult it is to write good verse, it was with reluctance that I recited for him my " Letter to Poets." He was very pleased with it and asked me was it known in Paris. I answered no. " You must send it," he said, " to the competition of the Academy. It will make a sensation." I suggested that I had given myself a licence of opinion that would scandalise many people. " I knew a respectable lady," he said, " who confessed that one day, after crying out at someone's audacity, finished by exclaiming: ' Delightful audacity!' The Academy will do the same."

Before dinner he took me to Geneva to pay several visits, and speaking of his mode of living with the Genevans: " It is very charming to live in a country where the sovereigns send to borrow your carriage when they come to dine."

His house was open to them, and they passed whole days there; and as the gates of the town were shut at eve and only opened at dawn, those who supped with him were obliged to sleep too, or in the country houses that bordered the lake.

On the way I asked him how, almost without territory and with no easy commerce with foreigners, Geneva had become wealthy. " By making the movements of watches, by reading your newspapers and profiting by your stupidities. These people know how to benefit by your borrowing." Apropos of Geneva he asked me what I thought of Rousseau. I answered that in his writings he seemed to me just an eloquent sophist, and in character a false cynic, who died of pride and spite in his tub if one ceased looking at him.

" You don't astonish me," said Voltaire. " The man is artificial from head to foot, in mind and soul;

but it is in vain he acts now the stoic and then the cynic; he belies himself all the time and his mask will suffocate him."

Amongst the Genevese I saw at Voltaire's house the only ones for whom I had any fondness, and who liked me, were the Chevalier Hubert and Cramer the bookseller. They were both easy to get on with, jovial and witty without affectation—a rare thing in their city. They told me that Cramer was a passable tragic actor; he was Orosmane to Madame Denis, and this talent gave him Voltaire's friendship and custom, which was worth millions. Hubert had a less useful gift, but amusing and very curious in its futility. He seemed to have eyes in the tips of his fingers. With his hands behind his back he cut portraits in profile, as like, or even more like, than with a pencil. He had Voltaire's face so vividly in his mind, that whether he were there or not, his scissors could depict him dreaming, writing, in movement and all his attitudes. I have seen landscapes cut out by him in white paper, in which the perspective was shown with prodigious skill.

M. de Voltaire wanted us to see his castle of Tournay, where his theatre was, a quarter of a league from Geneva. This was the after-dinner goal of our coach drive. Tournay was a rather neglected little country-squire's house, but with an admirable view. In the valley the lake of Geneva, bordered by country villas, and two large towns at either end, above and in the distance, a chain of mountains extending for thirty leagues, and Mont Blanc laden with unmelting snow and ice—such was the view from Tournay. There I saw the little theatre that tormented Rousseau, but where Voltaire consoled himself for not seeing the one that was still full of his glory. The thought of this unjust and tyrannical privation made me sad and indignant. Perhaps he noticed this, for more than once his observations reflected my thoughts, and on the road, returning, he spoke to me of Versailles, of his long sojourn there, and the kindness Madame de Pompadour had shown him once upon a time. " She likes you still," I said, " she has told me that so often; but she is weak, and dare not, or cannot, do all she wants to; for the unhappy lady is no longer loved, and perhaps she envies the fate of Madame Denis and longs to be at Les Délices." " Let her come," he said delightedly, " and act tragedies with us. I will create rôles for her, the rôles of queens; she is beautiful, she ought to know how to act passion." " She knows also profound sorrow and bitter tears," I said. " So much the better! That's what we want!" he cried, as if he were enchanted to find a new actress. And one could really imagine that he saw her arriving. " As she suits you, leave it to me," I said. " If the theatre of Versailles disappoints her, I will say that yours is waiting for her."

This romantic fiction exhilarated the company. It seemed quite possible to them; and Madame Denis, playing up to it, begged her uncle not to make her give up her parts to the new actress. He went to his study for some hours, and in the evening, at supper, kings and their mistresses being the subject of conversation, Voltaire, in comparing the wit and gallantry of the old court with the present one, displayed the wealth of a memory that had allowed nothing interesting to escape. From Mademoiselle de la Vallière to Madame de Pompadour, the anecdotal history of two reigns, and the intervening Regency, passed before our eyes so rapidly and brilliantly, and with such colour and character, that we were dazzled. But he reproached himself for having stolen from M. de l'Ecluse moments that he would have occupied more agreeably for us. He besought him to make amends by playing a few scenes from the

"Shell-Hucksters," and he laughed at these like a child.

The following day (it was the last we could spend together) he summoned me as soon as it was morning, and handing me a manuscript, he said: "Go into my study and read that, and give me your opinion." It was the tragedy of "Tancrède" he had just finished. I read it, and coming back, my face bathed in tears, I said to him that he had never written anything more interesting. "To whom would you give the part of Amneniade?" he asked. "To Clairon, to the sublime Clairon, and I will answer for a success equal at least to Zaïre!" "Your tears tell me what it is most important for me to know; but does anything check the action?" "I have only to make what you call study criticism," I said. "One would be too moved to notice it in the theatre." Fortunately he did not speak of style at all; I would have been obliged to dissimulate, for in my opinion it was not nearly as well written as the great tragedies. In "Rome Sauvée" and in "l'Orphélin de la Chine" I found still the fine versification of "Zaïre," of "Mérope" and the "Mort de César"; but in "Tancrède" I thought I saw the decadence of his style, loose verses, diffuse and full of redundant words to disguise the want of force and vigour—in a word, the old age of a poet, for with him, as with Corneille, the first thing to age was poetic style, and after "Tancrède," where the fires of genius still blazed, he became absolutely extinct.

Sad at our departure, he did not wish to deprive us of a single moment of this last day. His wish to see me a member of the Academy, praise of my "Tales," which were, he said, their pleasantest reading, and finally my analysis of Rousseau's letter to d'Alembert on theatrical performances—which he thought irrefutable and seemed to value highly—these were our subjects of conversation during our walk. I asked him if Geneva was on to the scent of the true reason of this letter of Rousseau's. "Rousseau is understood better in Geneva than in Paris. They are not deceived by his false zeal or false rhetoric. He is furious with me and that is perfectly obvious. Obsessed by an outrageous pride, he wants to be the only one who is spoken of in his country. My existence obscures him there; he grudges me the air I breathe, and above all he cannot endure that sometimes, by amusing Geneva, I steal a few moments from him whilst they think of me."

As we were leaving at dawn, when, the gates of the town being opened, we could have horses, we decided, with Madame Denis and Hubert and Cramer, to prolong the evening until then by talking together. Voltaire wished to be with us, and in vain we pressed him to go to bed; more wakeful than us, he read again several cantos from the poem "Jeanne." For me this reading had inexpressible charm, for although Voltaire adopted, to my mind, in reciting heroic verse, a too monotonous emphasis and too noticeable fall, no one could repeat familiar or comic verse with so much naturalness, grace and delicacy; his eyes and his smile had an expression I have seen in no one else. Alas! for me it was his swan-song, for I only saw him again when he was dying.

Our farewells moved us both to tears, but much more on my side than on his; that was unavoidable, for, apart from gratitude, and all the reasons I had for loving him, I left him in exile.

At Lyon we gave two days to the Fleurieu family, who expected me at their country house at La Tourette. The two following days were devoted to seeing the town; and from the threading of gold through silk, to the finishing of the richest fabrics, we followed rapidly all the processes of the art that made the wealth of this flourishing city. The workshops, the Town Hall, the beautiful Hospital of Charity, the Jesuit library and the Carthusian convent and theatre divided our attention.

I remember here that while going through on my way to Geneva Madame Destouches, directress of the theatre, had sent to ask me which of my tragedies I would like them to present on my return. I was grateful for the civility, but confined myself to thanking her; I asked them to play for my return whichever of Voltaire's tragedies they acted best, and they gave "Alzire."

The success of the "Letter to Poets" was such as Voltaire had predicted; but it only surpassed with difficulty two other admirable works that competed for the prize: one was the "Letter to the People" by Thomas, the other the letter by Abbé Delille "On the Advantages of Retreat for Writers." This event in my life was remarkable enough to occupy us for a moment. Hardly had I sent my "Letter" to the committee, when Thomas, as was his custom, came to show me what he was going to send. I thought it so beautiful, strong and noble, that it might very possibly carry off the prize from me. After hearing and praising it warmly, I said to him: "My friend, I am going to confide in you, but I make two conditions —one that you keep it absolutely secret, the other that when you have heard what I have to say, you will act as if I had told you nothing. I must have your word for this." He promised. "Now you must know," I continued, "that I have myself sent a work to compete." "In that case," he said, "I will withdraw mine." "That is just what I don't want, and for two reasons: one is that it is very possible they will reject mine as being heretical—you can judge that for yourself; the other because it is not sure that my work is more valuable than yours, and I do not wish to ſteal a prize that perhaps belongs to you. I hold you to your promise. Now liſten to my epiſtle." He heard it and agreed that there were daring and dangerous parts. So we knew we were each other's and also competitors with the Abbé Delille.

Now, one day, whilſt the Academy was sitting to examine the work and award the prize, I met Duclos at the Opéra and asked for news. "Don't speak to me about it! I think this competition will set fire to the Academy. Three works such as one seldom sees contend for the prize. There is no doubt about the excellence of two—everyone is agreed on that—but the third makes us giddy. It is the work of a young madman, full of fervour and audacity, who spares nothing, attacks all our literary prejudices, speaks of poets as a poet, and paints all in their true colours very frankly; he dares to praise Lucan and blame Virgil, to avenge Tasso for Boileau's contempt, to sum up Boileau himself, and reduce him to his right place. D'Olivet is furious, and says the Academy will be dishonoured if this insolent work is crowned; I think, however, that it will be." It was, but when I presented myself to receive the prize, d'Olivet swore he would not forgive me as long as he lived.

One very remarkable circumſtance in this election was the deceit used by my enemies, and those of d'Alembert and Duclos, to make us hated at the Dauphin's court. They began by spreading a rumour that my side would be againſt the Abbé de Radonvilliers, and if on the firſt ballot he got the moſt votes, he would not escape the insult of black balls at the second. Having made this prediction, all they had to do was to make it come true; and this is how they set about it. In the Academy there were four men described as Philosophers, an odious label at that time. These marked Academicians were Duclos, d'Alembert, Saurin and Watelet. The worthy heads of the other side—d'Olivet, Batteux, and probably Paulmy and Seguier—plotted to give the black balls themselves that would be attributed to the Philosophers; and in fact four black balls were found in the ballot.

Great astonishment and murmuring on the part of those who had given them, and, their eyes fixed on the four they wished to cover with suspicion, the tricksters said out aloud that it was very strange that a man as blameless and estimable as the Abbé de Radonvilliers should suffer the insult of four black balls! The Abbé d'Olivet was indignant at such a shameful, such a notorious scandal! The four Philosophers seemed confounded; but the luck soon turned to their advantage and the shame of their enemies. And this was the wave of the wand: the custom of the Academy when balloting by ball was to give to each elector two balls, one black and one white. The box into which they had to go had also two caps and underneath two cups, one black and the other white. When you favoured a candidate you put the white ball in the white cup, the black in the black. So that when they examined the voting they had to recover the number of balls, and find as many of the white in the black cup as there were black in the white cup.

Now, by a sort of inspiration, one of the Philosophers, Duclos, having foreseen the trick they wanted to play, said to his comrades: "Let us keep our black balls in our hands, so that, if those rascals are wicked enough to give theirs, we can prove that they did not come from us." So after having allowed d'Olivet to fulminate against the evilly disposed, he said, opening his hand: "It was not I who gave a black ball, because fortunately I kept mine; here it is." "Neither was it I," said d'Alembert, "for here is mine." Watelet and Saurin said the same, and showed theirs. At this unexpected incident confusion fell on the originators of the trick. D'Olivet was naïve enough to say that it was wrong to have warded off the blow by retaining the black balls, citing the rules of the Academy on the inviolable secrecy of the ballot. "Monsieur l'Abbé," d'Alembert said to him, "the first law of all is that of self-defence; and we had only this method of removing the suspicions you wished to place on us." This flash of prevision on Duclos' part became known to everyone, and the d'Olivets, taken in their own trap, were the talk of the court.

Duclos and d'Alembert had had an altercation before the whole Academy on the subject of the King of Prussia and Cardinal de Bernis; they had quarrelled so much that they were not on speaking terms, and at the moment when I was going to need their unity and friendliness, I found them enemies to each other. Duclos, the blunter of the two, but less quick-tempered, was also less hurt. The hostility of a man like d'Alembert was painful to him, and he wanted just to be reconciled to him, but wished me to persuade d'Alembert to make the first advances.

"I am indignant," he said to me, "at the oppression you have groaned under, and the heavy, cowardly persecution that you still have to endure. It is time to finish it. Bougainville is dying; you must have his place. Say to d'Alembert that I ask nothing more than to make it certain for you; if he will speak to me about it at the Academy we will arrange your affair for the next election." D'Alembert leapt with anger when I suggested he should speak to Duclos. "Let him go to the devil with his Abbé de Bernis! I don't want to have anything to do with one or the other." "In that case I give up the Academy. My sole regret is to have thought of it." "And why?" he said angrily. "Do you need Duclos to get you into it?" "And whom shall I not need when my friends desert me, and my enemies are more eager and energetic to injure me than ever? They would speak to the devil himself to deprive me of one vote." "You will be in the Academy in spite of your enemies," he replied. "No, sir, no, I shall never belong to it, and I don't want to. I shall be black-balled, supplanted and insulted by a party that is already too numerous and strong. I would rather live obscurely; for that, thank heaven, one needs no one." "But, Marmontel, you are angry! I don't know why!" "Oh, I know why myself! My dearest friend, the man I counted on most of all the world will not say two words to save me from oppression. . . ." "Well, oddslife, I'll say them! But nothing has cost me more in my life!" "Duclos has done you some grave wrong, then?" "What, don't you know how insolently, before the whole Academy, he spoke of the King of Prussia?" "Of the King of Prussia? And what does Duclos' insolence matter to that King? Ah, d'Alembert, if you had need of my cruellest enemy, and to serve you I had to pardon him, I would go and embrace him immediately." "Well, well," he said, "I will be reconciled with Duclos to-night: but let him work well for you, for I only do it at that price and for love of you. . . ." "He will," I answered. And, in fact, Duclos, overjoyed at seeing d'Alembert come back to him, worked for me as energetically as his friend.

But on the death of Bougainville, and at the moment when I flattered myself I would succeed him without hindrance, d'Alembert sent for me. "Do you know what they plot against you?" he said. "They are bringing a competitor to oppose you, and in his favour Praslin, d'Argental and his wife canvass the votes of the city and the court. They boast of getting a great number; and I fear it, for this competitor is Thomas." "I do not believe that Thomas would lend himself to this manœuvre." "But," he said, "Thomas is terribly embarrassed. You know they have shackled him with benefits and gratitude, then they urged him a great while ago to think of the Academy; and on his pointing out to them that his position as personal secretary to a minister would be an obstacle to his election, Praslin obtained a warrant from the King to ennoble his position. Now the obstacle is removed they insist he shall present himself, and answer for a huge plurality of votes. He is at Fontainebleau with his minister and beset by d'Argental. I advise you to go and see him."

I went, and, on arriving, wrote to Thomas to ask him for a rendezvous. He answered that he would be by the big lake at five o'clock. I waited for him there; and on approaching him, said: "You can easily surmise, my friend, my object in coming. I came to know if what they tell me is true," and I repeated what d'Alembert had told me.

"All that is true," Thomas answered, "and it is true again that M. d'Argental declared this morning that M. de Praslin wishes me to offer myself; that he insists on this mark of fidelity; that that was the condition of the letters patent they made me accept—that in accepting it I ought to understand why it was given me; that if I fail my benefactor for the sake of a man who has offended him, I lose my place and my fortune. That is my position. Now tell me what you would do in my place?" "Are you consulting me seriously?" I said to him. "Yes," he said, smiling, with the air of one who has decided his action. "Well, in your place I would do what you are going to do." "No, without evasion, what would you do?" "I don't know what to take as an example," I said to him, "but am I not your friend? Are you not mine?" "Yes," he said, "I act openly."

"Well . . .," I resumed, "if I had a son, and if he had the misfortune to minister to the hate of a Gusman against his friend, I . . ." "Don't finish it," said Thomas, pressing my hand; "my answer has been made, and well made." "Oh, my friend, can you believe I would doubt it?" "Nevertheless you came here to be sure," he said in a tone of gentle reproach. "No, certainly not," I replied. "It was not for myself I needed assurance, but for the people who do not know your soul as well as I know it." "Say to them that if ever I enter the Academy, it will be honourably. And with regard to the fortune, I have enjoyed it so little, and have done without it for so long, that I hope not to have unlearned how to do without it again." At these words I was so moved that I would have given up my place to him, if he would have accepted it, and could do so decently; but the hate of his minister against me was so explicit, that it would have seemed as if he had helped and I had succumbed to it. So we held to the free and frank conduct that was natural to us both. He did not enter the lists, and he lost his position as secretary. They were not, however, so imprudent as to deprive him of the post of secretary-interpreter to the Swiss.

He was received into the Academy directly after me, and unanimously, but not for some time, for from 1763 to 1766 there was no vacant place, although, one year with another, the number of deaths in the Academy was three in two years.

I must say, to the shame of Count de Praslin and the glory of Thomas, that the latter, after having refused to commit an act of slavery and baseness, thought it was his duty not to retire from the service of a man who had been good to him until he was dismissed. He remained with him a month, presenting himself as usual every morning at his rising, without that hard and vain man addressing one word to him, or deigning to look at him. Think how painful this mean ordeal was to a naturally proud and noble soul like Thomas. At last, after having been more grateful than he ought, seeing how irreconcilable the vile pride of this minister was with modest and patient honesty, he sent word to him that he was forced to take his silence as dismissal and he resigned. This behaviour completes your knowledge of his character; and on the side of fortune, he lost nothing for having behaved like an honest man. The King was pleased with him; and not only did he eventually obtain a pension of two thousand livres from the royal treasure, but a lodging in the Louvre given him by Count d'Angevilliers, his friend and mine.

When these narrows had been passed, my life again went its free and tranquil course. At first it was divided between town and country, and both made me happy. The only one of my town circles I did not frequent was the Menus Plaisirs. Cury, who had been the soul of it, was ill and ruined. He died a short time afterwards.

When his secret became known (only after his death), I sometimes heard it said that he ought to have declared himself as the author of the parody. I have always held that he ought not to have done so—and woe to me if he had! for he would have been persecuted, and I would have died of grief. It was my fault, and it would have been supremely unjust had another suffered the penalty. Besides, the parody as one saw it, full of coarse insults, was not the one he had written. It would have been necessary to disown one, whilst accusing himself of the other, and when he had made this distinction, who would have listened to him? He would have been lost and I the cause; in keeping silent he did what was better and more just for me and himself; and I owe him the sweetness of the life I lead since my fortunate disgrace gave me back to myself and my friends.

I do not put amongst the number of my own particular circles the company that met at Mademoiselle l'Espinasse's, for with the exception of some friends of d'Alembert, such as the Chevalier de Chaſtellux, Abbé Morellet, Saint Lambert and I, this circle was formed of people who were not linked together. She had taken them from here and there, but chosen so well that when they were together they harmonised like the ſtrings of an inſtrument tuned by a cunning hand. Continuing with this comparison, I might say that she played on this inſtrument with an art that was almoſt genius; she seemed to know what sound the ſtring she was going to touch would give: I mean that so well were our characters and minds known to her, that she had only to say one word to bring them into play. Nowhere was conversation livelier, or more brilliant, or better controlled. It was a rare phenomenon, this degree of even, moderate warmth, which she knew how to maintain, calming or ſtimulating it. The continual activity of her soul communicated itself to our minds, but with reſtraint; her imagination gave the impulse, her reason the control. And note that the minds she worked upon were neither shallow nor weak; Condillac and Turgot were amongſt them; and near her, d'Alembert was like a simple and obedient child. Her gift for throwing out an idea, and giving it to men of this type to discuss; her gift for discussing it herself, like them, with precision, and sometimes with eloquence; her gift for bringing in new ideas and varying the conversation, always with the freedom and ease of an elf, who with a wave of her wand changes the scene of her enchantment as she pleases; these gifts, I say, are not those of an ordinary woman. It was not with fashionable trifles or self-conceit that, every day for four hours' conversation without weariness or emptiness, she knew how to make herself intereſting to these brilliant minds. It is true that one of her charms was her ardent nature, that gave passion to her speech and coloured her opinions with the warmth, interest and eloquence of feeling. Also very often her thoughts were gay; a gentle philosophy allowed a playfulness to which d'Alembert gave the note, and who has ever known better than he to " mingle the learned with the easy, the grave with the gay "?

D'Alembert, to whom Madame du Deffant proposed imperiously the alternative of breaking with her, or Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, did not hesitate, and gave himself up entirely to his young friend. They lived far from one another, and, although it was painful in bad weather, for d'Alembert to return in the evening from Rue de Belle Chasse to Rue Michel le Comte, where his nurse lodged, he did not think of leaving her. But he fell ill, and dangerously enough to disquiet Bouvart, his doctor. His illness was one of those fevers from poisoning for which the first remedy is fresh air. Now his lodging at the glazier's wife was a small, badly lit, ill-ventilated room with a bed as narrow as a tomb. Bouvart asserted that the inconvenience of this lodging might prove disastrous to him. Watelet offered him one in his house, close to the Boulevard du Temple, and he was taken there. Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, in spite of what one might think or say, installed herself as nurse. No one thought or said anything but good of it.

D'Alembert came back to life, and from then, consecrating his days to her who had nursed him, he wished to lodge near her. Nothing was more innocent than their intimacy, and it was respected; even the malignant never attacked them; and the consideration which Mademoiselle l'Espinasse enjoyed, far from suffering any harm, was only more honourably and openly established by it. But this pure relationship, so tender and unchangeable on d'Alembert's side, was not so gentle and happy as it ought to have been for him.

The ardent soul and romantic imagination of Mademoiselle l'Espinasse made her conceive the idea of extricating herself from the narrow mediocrity in which she feared to grow old. With all her seductiveness and ability to please—even without being beautiful—it seemed possible to her that amongst her friends, and of them the most distinguished, someone would be enough in love to want to marry her. This ambitious hope, deluded more than once, was never discouraged: she changed the object of it, always more enthusiastic, and so spirited that one might have mistaken it for the intoxication of love. For instance, she was once so desperately smitten with what she called the heroism and genius of Guibert, that in military science and talent for writing she saw no one comparable to him; nevertheless he escaped like the rest. Then she thought she could aspire to the conquest of the Marquis de Mora, a young Spaniard of high birth; and in fact, whether it was love or enthusiasm, this young man had an intense feeling for her. Many times we saw him in adoration before her, and the impression she made on this Spanish soul became so serious that his family hastened to recall him. Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, thwarted in her desires, was not the same to d'Alembert, and he endured not only coldness, but fretful humours full of harshness and bitterness. He swallowed his hurt, and murmured to me only. Unhappy man, such was his devotion and obedience to her, that when M. de Mora was away, as soon as it was day, he went to the post to fetch his letters and bring them to her on her awakening. At last the young Spaniard fell ill in his own country, and his family were just waiting for his convalescence to let him make a good match; Mademoiselle l'Espinasse had the idea of getting a doctor to say that the climate of Spain would be fatal, that if they wanted to save him they must send him to breathe the air of France. And this prescription, inspired by Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, was secured by d'Alembert from Lorry, his intimate friend, and one of the most celebrated doctors in Paris. Lorry's authority, aided by the invalid, prevailed over the Spaniards. They let the young man depart; he died on the road, and Mademoiselle l'Espinasse's deep grief destroyed the frail organism already exhausted by her mind, and hastened her to the grave.

D'Alembert was inconsolable at his loss. It was then that he came to bury himself in his lodging at the Louvre. I have told elsewhere how he passed the rest of his life. He complained to me often of the baleful solitude into which he had fallen. Vainly I reminded him of what he had so often told me of the change in his friend. "Yes," he answered, "she had changed, but I had not; she lived no longer for me, but I lived only for her. Since she's dead, I don't know why I live. Oh, why must I still endure those bitter moments she knew so well how to soothe and make me forget? Do you remember the happy evenings we spent together? What is there left for me? When I come home, instead of her, I find only her shadow. This room at the Louvre is itself a tomb and I enter it with fear."

This is a summary of our conversations in the evenings when we walked alone in the Tuileries; and I ask you, is that the speech of a man who has no feeling?

Much happier than he, I lived amongst the most fascinating women without being held in bondage by any. Neither the pretty and exciting Filleul, nor the artless and beautiful Seran, nor the dazzling Villaumont, nor any of those with whom I was happiest, troubled my repose. As I knew they never thought of me, I was neither so simple nor so fatuous as to think of them.

What enchanted me in them was the grace of their minds, the quickness of their imagination, the easy and natural turn of their ideas and language, and a certain delicacy of thought and feeling, which, like the fineness of their features, seems reserved to their sex. Their conversation was an agreeable and not useless school for me, and I profited as much as possible from their lessons. Those who wish to write with precision, energy and vigour, should live with men solely; but those who want suppleness, urbanity, flexibility and a nameless charm in their style, would do very well, I think, to live with women. When I read that Pericles sacrificed every morning to the Graces, I understand by that—that every day he breakfasted with Aspasia.

But, however interesting, mentally, the society of charming women, it did not make me neglect to fortify my soul—to raise, expand and enlarge my thought, and enrich it in the society of men whose minds penetrated mine with warmth and light. The house of Baron d'Holbach, and, for some time, that of Helvétius, were the meeting places of this society, partly composed of the flower of Madame Geoffrin's guests, and partly of several souls that Madame Geoffrin found too daring and dangerous to be admitted to her dinners. She admired Baron d'Holbach and she liked Diderot, but on the sly and without committing herself. It is true she had admitted Helvétius and almost adopted him, but when he was still young, before he had done foolish things.

I had never really known why d'Alembert kept himself away from this circle. He and Diderot, associated in the work and glory of the Encyclopedia, had at first been sincerely united, but were so no longer; they spoke of each other with much respect, but did not live together and hardly ever saw one another. I have never dared ask them the reason.

Jean Jacques Rousseau and Buffon were for a while in the society of philosophers; but one broke openly, the other, with more adroitness and cunning, withdrew and stood apart. As for them, I think I know quite well their plan of conduct.

Buffon, with the King's library, and his "Natural History," thought he was strong enough to assume a position of social importance. He saw that the Encyclopedic School was in disfavour with the court and in the King's mind, and feared to be involved in the common shipwreck, and to go with full sail, or at least to manœuvre prudently by himself amidst the rocks, he preferred to have his ship free and disengaged. They bore him no grudge for his retirement, but it had also another cause.

Buffon, surrounded by hangers-on and flatterers, and accustomed to an obsequious deference to his preconceived ideas, was at times disagreeably surprised to find less reverence and docility amongst us. I have seen him go away displeased with the contradictions he had to suffer. Together with undeniable merit, he had a pride and presumption at least equal to it. Spoilt by praise, and put by the crowd into the same class as our great men, he was annoyed to see that the mathematicians, chemists and astronomers only gave him very inferior rank amongst themselves; that the naturalists were little disposed to place him at their head, and that from writers he only obtained the meagre tribute to an author with elegance and a fine gift for colour. Some of them even reproached him for having written sumptuously in an order of book that required a simple natural style. I remember one of his friends once asked me how I would speak of him, should it happen that I had to make his funeral oration at the Académie Française, and I answered that I would give him a distinguished place amongst the descriptive poets—a manner of praising him that did not please her.

So Buffon, ill at ease with his peers, shut himself up with ignorant and servile companions, visiting neither one nor the other of the Academies, seeking alone his fortune with the ministers, and his reputation at foreign courts, where in exchange for his works he received fine presents; but at least his pacifist pride did no harm to anyone.

We were not led, and kept on a lead, as at Madame Geoffrin's, but this liberty was not licence, and there were some revered and inviolable subjects that were never submitted to discussion. God, virtue, the holy laws of natural morality were never put in doubt, at least in my presence, that I can testify. The field of action was always vast enough, and in the soaring of their minds, sometimes I thought I heard the disciples of Pythagoras or Plato. It was there that Galiani was, sometimes, astonishing in the originality of his ideas, and the skilful, rare and unexpected manner of leading up to their development; there the chemist Roux revealed to us, by his genius, the mysteries of Nature; there Baron d'Holbach, who had read everything and forgotten nothing interesting, poured out abundantly the riches of his memory; above all, it was there, with his gentle and persuasive eloquence, and his face sparkling with the fire of inspiration, that Diderot spread his light in all our minds, his warmth in all our hearts. Who knows Diderot only by his writings knows him not at all. His theories on the art of writing changed his fine unaffectedness. When in speaking he grew animated, and letting the abundance of his thoughts flow naturally, he forgot his theories and followed the impulse of the moment; then he was enchanting. He never knew how to form his writings into a united shape: the first design, that orders all and puts everything into its place, was too slow and painful for him. He wrote in a fervour, having thought out nothing: therefore he has written wonderful pages—as he says himself—but he never really made a book. Now this fault of form disappears in the free and varied course of conversation.

One of Diderot's finest moments was when an author consulted him on his work. If the subject was worth the trouble you should have seen him take hold of it, fathom it and discover of what richness and beauty it was capable. If he saw that the author accomplished his aim badly, instead of listening to the reading he made up in his head what the author had missed. Was it a play? He threw in scenes, new incidents, or touches of character, and thinking he had heard all he dreamed, he would boast to us of the work someone had just read to him, and in which, when it saw the light of day, we found hardly anything of what he had quoted from it. In general, and in all branches of human knowledge, everything was so familiar and so vivid, that he seemed always prepared for what one had to say; and his most impromptu statements appeared to be the result of recent study or of a long meditation.

This man, one of the most enlightened of the century, was one of the most lovable; and when he extemporised on moral goodness I cannot set down in words the charm of his fervent eloquence. All his soul was in his eyes, on his lips. Never was a face so expressive of goodness of heart.

You must understand how delightful it was for me to have these excellent dinners, two or three times a week, in such good company: we all suited each other so well that when the fine weather came we interspersed these dinners with picnics in the neighbourhood of Paris, on the banks of the Seine; our entertainment those days was a wide boat, and we wandered over in turn the places noted for being provided with the finest fish. Most frequently it was Saint Cloud: we went down there in the morning by boat, breathing the air of the river; and we came back in the evening across the Bois de Boulogne. Conversation rarely flagged on these excursions.

EIGHTH BOOK

DURING one of the happy journeys I made to Saumur, I profited by my nearness to the estate of Ormes to go and see Comte d'Argenson, former Minister of War, whom the King had exiled there. I had not forgotten his kindness to me in the time of his renown. When quite young I had written a poem on the founding of a military school, of which he had the chief honour, and it had pleased him to make much of this sign of my enthusiasm. At table, in his house, he presented me to the military nobility as a young man who had a right to their gratitude and protection. He received me in his exile with great feeling. Oh, children, ambition is indeed an incurable disease! And how sad is the life of a disgraced minister! Already worn out by toil, grief completed the ruin of his health. His body was wasted by gout, but his mind much more cruelly by memories and regrets; and all through the kind welcome he tried to give me I could see he was afflicted by every kind of sorrow.

Whilst walking with him in his gardens, I saw in the distance a marble statue; I asked him what it was. "It is," he said, "something I never have the courage to look at," and turning me away: "Ah, Marmontel, if you knew how zealously I served him! If you knew how many times he has assured me we would spend our lives together, and that I had not a better friend than he in all the world! Those are Kings' promises! That is their friendship!" And saying these words his eyes filled with tears.

In the evening, while the others supped, we stayed alone in the salon. This room was hung with pictures representing the battles where the King had been with him personally. He showed me where they had been placed during the action; he repeated to me what the King had said to him—he had not forgotten one word. "Here," he said, speaking of one of the battles, "for two hours I thought my son was dead. The King was kind enough to be touched by my grief. How he has changed! Nothing about me could touch him any more." These ideas haunted him, and if he were left alone for a little, he seemed to be engulfed by his sorrow. Then his daughter-in-law, Madame de Voyer, came quickly and sat by him, pressed him in her arms, and caressed him; and he let his head fall on the breast or on the knees of his comforter, like a child, bathed them with his tears and made no secret of it.

This unhappy man, who had to eat only fish because of his gout, was thus deprived of the only sensual pleasure he had really enjoyed—for he was greedy. But the austerest régime procured no alleviation for his pains. On leaving him I could not avoid showing how his sorrows affected me. "You add to them," he said, "the regret never to have done you any good when it would have been so easy."

A short time after he got permission to be removed to Paris. I saw him arrive there dying, and we bade each other the last farewells.

My friend Vaudesir had an estate near Angers which gave its name to his unfortunate son, Sainte James. As he knew that I went every year to Saumur on the road to Angers, he offered once to take me there in his post-chaise, on condition that on our journey he would have three days with Sainte James, where he was going. I willingly agreed to these conditions, and at Sainte James I saw the flower of the fine wits of the Angevine Academy; amongst others, an abbé who was very like the Abbé Beau Génie in the "Mercure Galant." He had just made himself remarkable by a stupidity so strange and rare that I could not believe it. "Will you believe it," said Vaudesir, "if he repeats it to you himself? Only help me to bring it about and you will see." Towards the end of dinner I set the abbé for the scene by speaking to him of his Academy, and Vaudesir, taking the cue, made a pompous eulogy of it. "It is," he said to me, "the most illustrious and best composed literary body after the French Academy. Quite recently M. de Contades the younger was received there. M. de l'Abbé spoke in the name of the Academy with the greatest success." "In praising the son M. de l'Abbé did not fail to praise the father?" "No, to be sure," said the abbé, "I took good care not to fail there, and I paid M. le Maréchal a noble tribute." "The field was rich and wide. However, there was one difficult place." "Yes," he answered, smiling, "the Minden affair; that was really a critical moment. But I got through it fairly well. First, I spoke of all the feats that had made M. le Maréchal de Contades worthy of the command of the army; I recalled all his most glorious deeds up till then, and when I got to the Battle of Minden, I said just two words: Contades appeared, Contades was conquered, and then I spoke of other things." As laughter was choking me I wanted to divert attention and said: "The words of Cæsar after defeating the son of Mithridates were, 'I came, I saw, I conquered.'" "That is right," said the abbé, "but my phrase is thought to be even more laconic." The grave and pompous way he repeated this nonsense was so amusing that Vaudesir and I did not dare look at each other for fear of bursting out into laughter; we only kept our faces with great difficulty.

These journeys and absences displeased Madame Geoffrin. I never attended the Academy all through the summer. They complained to her; she considered that I was seriously at fault to allow more assiduous Academicians to show more presence counters than myself (which with regard to the Olivets was certainly an ill-grounded fear), and I had often to endure sharp reprimands on what she called the inconsequence of my conduct. "What could be really more ridiculous," she said, "than to wish to belong to the Academy, and then not to attend when you have been received?" I had the example of most for an excuse, as they were still less assiduous than I. But she maintained, and truly, that my academic functions demanded continual attendance. Also, she had her own little personal interest in these reproaches, for she spent the summers in Paris, and did not like her literary society to disperse during that time. I listened to her warnings with modest respect, and the next day escaped as if she had said nothing. It was quite natural that her kindness to me was chilled by this, but one dinner at which I would behave nicely, and she was reconciled, and on really serious occasions she was affectionate once more.

I had been given a print of Vandyk's picture of Bélisaire; it often attracted my gaze, and I marvelled that poets had never drawn on this moral and interesting subject. The desire came to me to treat it in prose, and from the moment this idea took possession of my mind, my illness stopped as if by a sudden charm. Marvellous power of the imagination—the pleasure of inventing my tale, the exertion of arranging and developing it, the interest roused in me by the first glimpses of the scenes and situations as I designed them—all this caught me and took me out of myself to such an extent as to make me believe what one hears of ecstatic rapture. My chest was oppressed, I breathed painfully, I had fits of convulsive coughing, but I hardly noticed it. People came to see me, and spoke about my illness; I answered like a man occupied with other things—I was thinking of Bélisaire.

Insomnia, which had been so distressing to me, was no longer a weariness or a torment. My nights as well as my days passed in dreaming of the adventures of my hero. I exhausted myself with it none the less, and this continual work would have killed me, had they not found a remedy for my disease. It was Gatti, a doctor from Florence, celebrated as the promoter of inoculation, clever in his art, and moreover a very charming man—it was he who saved me. " It is a question of breaking up," he said, " the thick and sticky fluid that chokes your lung, and the remedy is pleasant; we must make you drink oxymel." So we had only to mix fine honey and vinegar over the fire, and the syrup formed by this mixture cured me in a very short time. For three months I thought I was going to die, but in those three months my work had advanced. Only the chapters that required study remained to be written. The most interesting—all the imaginative work—was done.

If this work is more serious than my other writings it is because, when composing it, I thought I was uttering my last words—*novissima verba*, as the ancients said.

The first trial of reading this I made on Diderot; the second on the hereditary Prince of Brunswick who reigns to-day. Diderot was very pleased with the moral part, but he thought the political too short, and made me promise to extend it. The Prince of Brunswick was travelling in France, after having fought us with a chivalrous integrity and heroic valour, and he enjoyed in Paris the great respect his virtues merited—a more flattering homage than the usual deference paid to people of his birth and rank. He wished to attend a special sitting of the French Academy, an honour reserved until then for crowned heads. At this sitting I read a long extract from " Bélisaire," and had the pleasure of watching this young hero's face flush and his eyes fill with tears at the pictures I put before him.

It pleased him particularly to talk with writers, and you will soon see how he prized it. Helvétius gave a dinner for him with us, and he vowed he had never in his life had such a dinner. I was not meant to be noticed there, but was nevertheless. Helvétius remarked to the Prince that the Pretender resembled him, and the Prince answered that in fact many people had noticed this resemblance, whereupon I said softly: "With a few more marks of resemblance Prince Edward would have been King of England." This remark was heard, and it touched the Prince, for I saw him blush with modesty and bashfulness.

In so far as the reading of "Bélisaire" succeeded at the Academy, I was certain it would fail at the Sorbonne. But that did not trouble me, and provided the Court and Parliament did not meddle in the quarrel I would have liked to see myself grapple with the Theological Faculty. So I took precautions to have only them to deal with. The Abbé Terray was not yet in the ministry, but in Parliament he had the greatest possible influence. I went to spend some time with Madame Gaulard, his friend, at his estate of la Motte, and there I read "Bélisaire" to him. Although he had small capacity for emotion, he was moved by this reading. After having interested him I confessed that I expected some hostility from the Sorbonne, and I asked him if he thought Parliament would condemn my book if it were censured. He assured me that Parliament would not meddle at all in this, and promised to defend me should I be attacked.

This was not all. I needed immunity and the assurance that the immunity would not be revoked. I had no personal influence with old Maupéou, Keeper of the Seals, but my bookseller's wife, Madame Merlin, knew him, and was a protégée of his. I asked her to present me, and he promised us his support.

I still had to provide against accidents at Court, and there the perilous thing was not theology. I dreaded the illusions, the malign suggestions, and the accusation of having thought of someone else than Justinian in the picture of a deceived and weak king. Unfortunately, there was too great an analogy between the two reigns; the King of Prussia felt this so much that when he received my book, he wrote with his own hand at the end of a letter from his secretary, Lecat: " I have just read the beginning of your ' Bélisaire '; you are very daring!" Others might say this; and if the enemies I still had attacked me on that score I was lost.

However, there were no means of taking direct precautions against that. Had I shown the least disquietude, they would have been on the watch, and I would have been denounced. No one would have taken the risk of reassuring me or have promised assistance; and the first counsel given me would have been to throw my work to the flames, or to strike out all that might suggest allusions—and what would I not have to strike out?

I assumed an appearance quite opposite to uneasiness. I wrote to the Minister of the King's Household, Comte de Saint Florentin, that I was on the point of bringing out a work whose subject seemed to me worthy of appealing to the King's heart; that I desired ardently His Majesty would permit me to dedicate it to him, and that in giving it to him (the minister) to examine I was asking him to solicit this favour for me. For that I asked one minute's audience, and he granted it. Confiding my manuscript to him, I confessed in confidence that there was one chapter which might highly displease fanatical theologians. " It is very much to my interest," I told him, "that the secret should not be divulged; and I beg you, M. le Comte, not to let my manuscript leave your study." As he was friendly towards me, he promised, and kept his word; but several days later, when handing me back my book which he had read, or had read to him, he said that the religion in "Bélisaire" would not be to the taste of the theologians, that probably my book would be censured, and because of that alone he dared not propose to the King to accept the dedication. Upon which I asked him to be kind enough to be silent about it, and retired quite satisfied.

What did I really want? To have a witness of my intention to dedicate my work to the King, and consequently a proof that nothing was further from my thought than to make a satire of his reign; which was the truth. With this means of defence I was at peace again on this score. But I had to pass under the censor's eye, and, instead of one, they gave me two, the literary censor not daring to undertake to approve what touched on theology.

So behold "Bélisaire" submitted to examination by a doctor of the Sorbonne: he was called Chevrier. Eight days after I had delivered my book to him I went to see him. Returning it to me he praised it extremely, but glancing at the last page I didn't see his approbation. "Be so kind," I said, "as to write two words there." His answer was a smile. "What! don't you approve?" "No, sir; God forbid!" he answered gently. "Then can I know at least what you think is so reprehensible?" "Little in detail, but much in the whole; and the author knows too well in what spirit he has written the book to insist that I put my approbation to it." I tried to press him to explain himself. "No, sir, you understand me very well, and I understand you; let us lose no more time in saying more, but look for another censor." Happily I found a less difficult one, and "Bélisaire" was printed.

As soon as it appeared the Sorbonne was in an uproar; and it was decided by the wise doctors to censure it. For many people this censure would have been an appalling thing, and it was to several of my friends. Alarm spread amongst them; they counselled me to appease, if it were possible, the fury of the doctors; others, stronger and more jealous of my honour as a philosopher, exhorted me not to weaken. I reassured the one and the other, told my secret to no one, and began by listening to the public.

My book was taken up; the first edition was exhausted; I pushed on the second and hurried the third. Nine hundred copies were sent out before the Sorbonne had extracted what they ought to censure, and, thanks to the fuss they made over the fifteenth chapter, people spoke only of that, which was like the tail of Alcibiades' dog to me. I rejoiced to see how well the doctors had served me by putting people's minds on the wrong scent. My part was to appear neither weak nor rebellious, and to gain time to let the editions of my book multiply and spread through Europe. I held myself on the defensive without having the air of fearing the Sorbonne, or of setting them at defiance, when an abbé, who since has had enemies of his own to combat—the Abbé Georgel—came to invite me to take the Archbishop as mediator, declaring that, if I went to see him, I would be well received, and that he knew how to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the Faculty. Nothing suited my plan better than ways of conciliation. I went to see the prelate; he received me with a paternal air, calling me " My dear Mr. Marmontel " all the time. I was touched by the kindness that these gentle words seemed to express: I know since that it was monseigneur's formula in speaking to common people.

I assured him of my good faith, of my respect for religion, of the desire I had to leave no cloud on my doctrine or that of my book; I only asked the favour of being allowed to explain myself on all the points in the book that seemed blameworthy before him and the doctors. The part of mediator, of conciliator appeared to please him. He promised to act, and told me, on my side, to go and see the advocate of the Faculty, Dr. Riballier, and explain myself to him.

I went to see Riballier: our interviews and my correspondence with him are printed. I refer you to that.

The other doctors assembled by the Archbishop in his house at Conflans, where I went to confer with them, were a little less dishonest than Riballier; but in our discussions they also had the habit of falsifying passages to pervert the sense. Armed with patience and moderation, I rectified the texts they had altered, and explained my idea to them, offering to insert notes of these explanations in my book; the Archbishop was quite pleased with me, but these gentlemen were not. "All that you say is useless," concluded finally the Abbé de Fevre (an old quibbler who was never called anything but la Grande Cateau in the school); "the fifteenth chapter must absolutely be taken out of your book; that's where the poison is."

"If what you demand were possible," I answered, "perhaps I might do it for love of peace, but at this hour there are forty thousand copies of my book circulating in Europe, and in all the editions printed and that are being printed, the fifteenth chapter is there, and will always be there. So what good will it do to make an edition now without it? No one will buy this mutilated edition; it will be money lost for myself or my bookseller." "Very well," he said to me, "your book will be censured without pity." "Yes, without pity, M. l'Abbé. I expect it will be you who will write out the censure. But monseigneur will be my witness that I would have done, to soften you, all that could be reasonably asked of me."

"Yes, my dear Mr. Marmontel," said the Archbishop, "on many of the points I have been satisfied of your good faith and obedience; but there is one detail on which I demand from you a formal and authentic retraction, and that is on tolerance." "If monseigneur will look at some lines I wrote this morning, he will see clearly explained what is my personal opinion on this subject, and my reasons." I presented this note to him; you will find it at the end of "Bélisaire." He read it in silence and had it passed to the doctors. "Splendid!" they said. "Commonplaces, repeated a thousand times, a thousand times refuted—the rubbish of the schools!" "You treat the authority of the Fathers of the Church and St. Paul with much contempt!" I said. "My reasoning rests on them." They replied "that the writings of the Fathers of the Church was an arsenal where all parties find their weapons, and that the passage from St. Paul I quoted as an authority proved nothing." "Very well," I answered, "as your authority is the only law, what do you want?" "The right of the sword," they told me, "to exterminate heresy, irreligion and impiety, and to make all submit to the yoke of faith."

Here I counted on retiring in good order, and on holding myself retrenched in a position where they could not attack me. "Præmunitum, atque ex omni parte causæ septum" ("De Or.," i. 3). I replied that the sword was one of the carnal weapons that St. Paul condemned when he said: "Arma militæ nostræ non carnalia sunt." And at these words I was going to retire. The prelate detained me, and holding my hands in his, implored me, with a truly laughable pathos, to subscribe to this atrocious dogma. "No, monseigneur. If I signed that I should feel I had dipped my pen in blood, I should feel I had approved all the cruelties committed in the name of religion." "Then you attach great importance and authority to your opinion," said le Fèvre with his pedagogic insolence. "I know, M. l'Abbé, that my authority is nothing, but my conscience is something, and it is that which in the name of humanity, in the name of religion even, forbids me from approving persecutions. 'Defendenda religio est, non occidendo sed moriendo; non sævitia, sed patientia. . . . Si sanguine, si tormentis si malo religionem defendere velis, jam non defendetur sed polluetur, atque violabitur.' That is the conviction of Lactantius, also of Tertullian and St. Paul, and you will permit me to say that these people are something to you."

"Come," he said to his colleagues, "we must not speak any more. Monsieur wishes to be censured; he will be." And this ended the conference. What was valuable to me was the issue I had drawn it to—it was no longer a case of theological chicane which would have exposed me to the quibbles of the school; it was a controversial point reduced to the simplest, most striking and decisive terms. They wished, I could see, to make me recognise the right of forcing belief, to employ the sword, torture, the scaffold and the stake; they wished to make me approve the preaching of the Gospel dagger in hand; and I refused to subscribe to this abominable doctrine. And that is why the Abbé le Fèvre said I would be censured without pity. This summary, which I spread round the town, the Court, in Parliament, in the council, made the Sorbonne detested: at the same time my friends excited ridicule against it, and I relied on them.

The first work of the Theological Faculty was to take out the guilty propositions in my book. It was who should have the glory of finding the greatest number. They culled them with nice care like pearls, and vied with each other to collect the treasure. After having collected thirty-seven, and finding this a sufficient number, they had the list printed under the title "Indiculus." Voltaire added to that the epithet "Ridiculus." Adjective and noun had never harmonised so well: Indiculus Ridiculus seemed made for each other; they remained inseparable. M. Turgot made fun of the doctors' foolishness in another way. As he was a good theologian himself and a still better logician, he first established the evident and universally recognised principle, that of two contradictory propositions, if one is false, the other is necessarily true. Then he put opposite each other, in two parallel columns, the thirty-seven propositions cast out by the Sorbonne, and the thirty-seven contradictions very clearly stated. There was no middle course; in condemning one, the Faculty must adopt and profess the other. Now amongst these there was not a single one that was not horribly revolting or absurdly ridiculous. This ray of light thrown on the doctrine of the Sorbonne was threatening. Vainly they tried to withdraw their "Indiculus"; it was too late; the blow had been struck.

Voltaire undertook to drag the advocate Riballier in the mud, and also his copyist Cogé, a professor in this same College Mazarin, of which Riballier was principal, and who, at his dictation, had written a slanderous libel against "Bélisaire" and me. At the same time, with that weapon of ridicule which he wielded so well, Voltaire fell with all his might on the entire Sorbonne; and his little leaflets, arriving from Geneva and fluttering through Paris, amused the public at the Faculty's expense. Other of my friends, excellent dialecticians and jesters, also were kind enough to take up my defence so well that the decree of the theological tribunal was already scouted and disgraced before it appeared.

Whilst the Sorbonne, still more furious at being mocked, worked with all its might to make "Bélisaire" heretical, deistic, impious, "enemy of the Throne and the Church" (for those were the great battle-cries), letters from the sovereigns of Europe, and from the most enlightened and wisest men arrived from all sides, full of praise for my book—which they said ought to be the vade-mecum of kings. The Empress of Russia had translated it into Russian, and had dedicated the translation to an Archbishop of her country. The Empress, Queen of Hungary, in spite of the Archbishop of Vienna, had ordered it to be printed in her States, she who was so severe with regard to writings attacking religion. I did not neglect, as you may well imagine, to inform the Court and Parliament of this universal success; and neither one nor the other wanted to share the ridicule of the Sorbonne. Things having been thus arranged and my presence being no longer necessary in Paris, I used the time the doctors took to invent their censure—I used this time in fulfilling the sacred duties of friendship.

Two of our French Bishops came to the waters and lodged near us. One Broglie, Bishop of Noyon, was ill; the other accompanied him—it was Marbeuf, Bishop of Autun, who since had been made minister of the *feuille*. The author of a book being censured by the Sorbonne was an object of curiosity to them. They came to see me, and invited me to take walks with them. I quite understood that these prelates wanted to pat the ball about to keep their hands in, and as I liked the game well enough, I willingly joined them. They began, as you can imagine, by speaking about "Bélisaire." They expected to find me terribly frightened at the decree the Sorbonne had fulminated against me, and were surprised to see my calm under anathema. "Bélisaire," I said, "is an old soldier, an honest and Christian man in his soul, loving the religion of a kind heart and good faith; he believes in all that is taught in the Gospel, and only rejects what is not. He refuses to believe in the black phantoms of superstition and the monstrous horrors of fanaticism. I proposed to the Sorbonne to make this distinction evident in explanatory notes added to my book. They refused this way of reconciliation; they wanted to cut out the fifteenth chapter of a book of which forty thousand copies had already been distributed—a childish demand; this mutilated edition, fit only for the rubbish heap, would have ruined me. Finally, they persisted in demanding that I recognised the dogma of civil intolerance, the right of the sword, the right of outlawry, exile, prisons, daggers, torture and the stake, to compel belief in the religion of the lamb; and as in the lamb of the Gospel I did not want to recognise the tiger of the inquisition, I held by the doctrine of Lactantius, Tertullian, St. Paul, and the spirit of the Gospel. That is why the Sorbonne is manufacturing a censure in which they will blast Bélisaire, Lactantius, Tertullian, St. Paul and whoever thinks as they do. Take care, messeigneurs, for you might well be amongst the number."

"But why do philosophers join in discussions about theology?" asked the Bishop of Autun. "Why do theologians join in tyrannising over minds," I replied, "and exciting princes to use force to compel people to believe? Are princes judges of the articles of doctrine and the objects of faith?" "No, certainly not," he said; "a prince is no judge of these." "And you make them torturers!" "I do not know," he answered, "why theologians are accused to-day of a kind of persecution that exists no more. Never has the Church been more moderate in the use of her power." "It is true, monseigneur, that she uses it more sparingly; to preserve it she has tempered it!"

“Then why take this moment,” he persiſted, “to attack her?” “Because one does not write solely for the moment one is writing; one has to fear that the future might resemble the paſt; one takes the time of low tide to repair the dykes.” “Ah, the dykes! the so-called philosophers will pull them down; and they are on the way to deſtroy religion.” “If the character of this charitable, benevolent and peaceable religion is left,” I answered, “I dare to assert that not even the moſt unbelieving will dare to attack it, and the impious will hold their peace. It is neither pure dogma, nor moral doctrine, nor myſteries that raise up enemies againſt it: but the violent and fanatical opinions that a splenetic theology has mixed with the doctrines—that is what rouses many fine minds. Let it be freed from this admixture, let it be purified and led back to a primitive holiness, then those who attack will be the open enemies of the sad who are consoled, the oppressed that are relieved, and the weak who gain support.” “You speak in vain,” answered the Bishop. “This doctrine is unchanging, the building is cemented, and never will we permit one ſtone to be taken away.” I pointed out to him that the art of mining had been carried very far, that with a little powder the higheſt towers might be utterly brought down, and that even the hardeſt rocks can be broken. “Heaven preserve me,” I added, “from wanting this prophecy to be fulfilled! I loved sincerely, and revere from the bottom of my heart this comforting religion; but if it ever dies, theological fanaticism will be the only cause—it will be that which will give the fatal blow.”

Then, going a little way from me, and speaking in a low voice to the Bishop of Noyon, I thought I heard him say: “It will laſt longer than us.” He deceived himself. Then, coming back to me: “If you love religion, why join with those who are meditating its destruction?" "I join only those who love it as I do, and who desire it to be as it came from heaven, pure, without intermixture or stain, sicut aurora consurgens, pulchra ut lune, electa ut sol." He added, smiling: "Terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata." "Yes," I answered, "terrible to the wicked, to fanatics, to the impious; but terrible in the future with weapons that are fitting, and they are neither steel nor flame." This was almost our first conversation.

Another time, as he unceasingly repeated that the philosophers allowed themselves too much liberty, I said: "It is true, monseigneur, that sometimes they take it into their head to supplant you in the performance of your finer duties; but it is only as long as you do not deign to fulfil them yourselves." "What duties?" he asked. "Firstly, that of preaching from the housetops truths which are told too rarely to kings, to their ministers, and the flatterers who surround them. Since the exile of Fénelon, or, if you like, since the little affecting course of morals that Massillon had made for Louis XV. as a child—premature lessons, and, because of that, useless—have the vices and public crimes found in the priesthood a single courageous aggressor? In the pulpit they rebuke little weaknesses and ordinary frailties; but the disastrous passions, political scourges, in a word, the moral springs of humanity's evils—who dare attack them? Who dare call pride to account, ambition, vainglory, false zeal, the rage to dominate and seize upon; who dare before God and man call them to account for the tears and blood of their innumerable victims?" Then I supposed a Chrysostom in the pulpit, and in expounding the subjects that would invoke his eloquence, perhaps I was eloquent myself at that moment.

Be that as it may, my two prelates, after having felt my pulse two or three times, found my sickness incurable; and when, one day showing them the manuscript of the "Incas" on my table, I said to them: "There is a work that will reduce your doctors to the alternative of burning the Gospels, or of respecting in Las Casas, the apostle of the Indies, the same sentiments and doctrines they condemn in 'Bélisaire,'" they saw that there was nothing to hope from me. So, their zeal discouraged, or rather their curiosity satisfied, they let me dispose of the time we wasted together—they trying to make a philosopher-theologian out of me, and I in trying to make theologian-philosophers out of them.

The work that my book on the Incas still demanded was interrupted sometimes in order to write a memorandum to plead the cause of the peasants in the north, and this is printed in my collected works.

I had just read in the gazettes that the Economic Society of St. Petersburg, by an anonymous person, proposed a prize of a thousand ducats for the best work on this question: Is it advantageous to the State that the peasant has ownership of land, or should he only possess movable goods? And how far should this right of ownership extend to be advantageous to the State?

I had no doubt that the anonymous person was the Empress of Russia herself; and since she wished the truth on this great subject to be known in her country, I resolved to show it to her in its entirety. One of the Russian ministers, M. de Saldern, had come to take the waters at Aix-la-Chapelle. I saw him often, and he spoke to me about northern affairs with as much openness of heart as a wise minister can. Through him my memoir arrived at its destination. It did not gain the prize, as I had foreseen; but it made an impression, of which I got several signs.

Madame de Séran was the daughter of a M. de

Bulioud, a great gentleman, but without money, late Governor of the Pages of the Duc d'Orléans. By the strangest and quite inexplicable mischance, this young girl, when she was fifteen years of age, became the object of her father's violent and gloomy temper and her mother's dislike. Beautiful as Love and still more interesting, through the charm of her goodness and naïve innocence than the brilliance of her beauty, she was weeping and mourning in this sad and cruel state, when her father suddenly decided to arrange a marriage for her, giving as dowry his position as Governor of the Pages, which he gave up to his son-in-law. The husband he presented to her was also a man of old family, whose only property was a small estate in Normandy. It was nothing to be poor—M. de Séran was ugly, and repulsively so: red, ill-formed, one-eyed, otherwise the best and most honest of men. When he was presented to our beautiful Adelaide, she grew pale with fright, and her heart turned sick with disgust and repugnance. The presence of her parents made her disguise this first impression as much as possible; but M. de Séran noticed it. He asked if he might have a few moments alone with her, and then said to her: "Mademoiselle, you think I am very ugly, and are appalled—I can see that—you may confess it without evasion. If you think your repugnance is not to be overcome, speak to me as a friend; I will keep your secret, and take the blame of breaking off on myself; your father and mother shall know nothing of what you tell me. But if it is possible to make this ungainliness endurable in a husband, and if for that it needs but the care and kindness of a real and tender friendship, you may expect it from the heart of a man who will be grateful to you all his life for not having rejected him. Ask yourself, and then answer me; you are absolutely free."

Adelaide was so miserable: she saw in this good man such a sincere desire to give her a gentler life, that she hoped to have the courage to accept him. "Sir," she said to him, "what you have just said, the goodness and honesty of your words fill me with the sincerest respect. Give me twenty-four hours for consideration and come to see me again to-morrow."

It needed all the most urgent counsels of good sense and unhappiness to decide her, but finally the regard that M. de Séran had inspired in her triumphed over all her distaste. "Sir," she said on seeing him again, "I am sure that ugliness, even as beauty, is forgotten, and that the only qualities not weakened by habit, but which grow more valuable every day, are those of the soul: I find these in you, and that is enough; I entrust my happiness to your goodness. I wish to make you happy." So Mademoiselle de Bulioud married before she was fifteen; and M. de Séran was everything he had promised to be. I don't say that this marriage had the delight of love; but it had the sweetness of peace, and friendship, and the tenderest regard. The husband saw his wife surrounded by adorers without uneasiness, and the wife, by her reasonable and decent behaviour, deserved her husband's confidence.

However, as it was impossible to see, or to hear, or, above all, to know her without wishing her a better fate, her friends busied themselves with the care of her happiness. When the Duc de Chartres married they thought of securing a splendid position for her near the young princess; but for that, not only was it necessary to belong to the old and pure nobility, but to have been presented to the King; that was the etiquette of the court of Orleans. This honour was reserved for nobility of four hundred years' standing, and to that she had a title. She was granted a presentation, but the King, having listened attentively to the praise of her beauty and the testimony of her noble birth, gave his consent on the condition that, after the presentation, she should go and thank him. This point was kept secret from M. de Séran; neither had his wife expected it, for in quite good faith, she only aspired to the place that had been promised to her at the court of the Duc d'Orléans, and when she had to go to the rendezvous given by the King in the small apartments and thank him alone and so privately, I know that she was trembling. However, she went, and I arrived at Madame Filleul's as they were waiting for her to return. It was there that I learnt what I am telling you; I saw that the position at the court of Orleans was, for her friends, simply a plausible pretext, and that the actual rendezvous was the important thing.

I had the pleasure of seeing ambitious castles in Spain rise up—the young countess all-powerful, the King and court at her feet, all her friends overwhelmed with gifts and favours, myself honoured by the confidence of the mistress, and, through her, inspiring him and making the King do all the good I wanted done: there was never anything so fine. They waited for the young Queen-to-be, they counted the minutes, and died of impatience to see her, yet were very pleased that she tarried.

At last she arrived and told us her adventure. A groom of the chamber awaited her at the railing of the chapel; night had fallen; she was taken up a hidden staircase to the small apartments. The King did not keep her waiting. He greeted her kindly, took her hands, kissed them respectfully, and seeing she was timid, reassured her with gentle words and kind glances. Then he made her sit opposite him, congratulated her on the success of her presentation, saying that everyone agreed that nothing so beautiful had ever appeared before at court. "'So it is really true, sire, that happiness is beautifying? If it is I ought to be still more lovely now.' 'And you are,' he said, taking my hands and pressing them softly in his own, which were trembling. After a moment's silence, when our looks alone spoke, he asked me what was the place I desired at his court. I answered: 'The position of Princesse d'Armagnac' (an old friend of the King who had just died). 'Ah, you are very young,' he said, 'to replace a friend who witnessed my birth, who has held me on her knee, whom I have loved from the cradle. It needs time, madame, to gain my confidence: I have been deceived so often.' 'Oh, I will not deceive you,' I said to him, 'and if it only needs time to be worthy of the beautiful title of friend, I can give you a great deal of it.' Such words from my twenty-odd years surprised but did not displease him. Changing the subject, he asked me if I found his small apartments furnished in sufficiently good taste. 'No,' I told him, 'I would rather have them blue.' As blue was his colour, he was flattered. I added that except for that I thought them charming. 'If you are happy here,' he said, 'I hope you will come here sometimes: for instance, every Sunday at the same hour as to-day.' I assured him that I would seize every possible moment to serve him. Upon which he left me to have supper with his children. He gave me a rendezvous in eight days, at the same hour. So I announce to you all that I am the King's friend, and that I will never be anything more."

As this resolution was in her heart and not only in her head she kept it, as I have proof. At the second rendezvous she found the salon furnished in blue as she had desired—a charming attention. She went there every Sunday; and through Janel, the superintendent of the post, she frequently received, in between the meetings, letters in the King's hand; but in these letters, which I saw, he never passed beyond the bounds of respectful gallantry, and the answers she wrote, full of wit and grace and delicacy, flattered his self-love without flattering his love. Madame de Séran had boundless natural and easy wit, the naïve and simple pleasantness of which enchants those who possess it and those who do not. The vanity of the King, difficult to conquer, was soon at its ease with her. From their second meeting the minutes preceding the State supper of the King seemed so short to him, that he begged her to wait and accept a small supper served to her, promising to cut his own as short as possible, in order to have several more moments with her. As he had a small library in his rooms, one evening she asked for a pleasant book to read in his absence, and as the King left the choice to her, she was kind and thoughtful enough towards me to ask for "Bélisaire." "I haven't got it," the King replied; "it is the only one of his works that Marmontel has not given me." "Then choose for me, sire, a book that will amuse or interest me." "I hope this will interest you." And he gave her a collection of verses written on his convalescence. This was a wide and ample store of praise for her to draw from after supper, all the more flattering because wit had dictated the sentiments. If the King had been young and full of the fire that gives audacity and compels its forgiveness, I would not have sworn that the young and modest countess could always have conducted the delicate matter of private meetings without danger; but the feeble, timid, ill-assured desire of a man aged more by self-indulgence than years needed to be encouraged—and a decent, reserved and modest manner was not the way to do it. The young woman understood this perfectly, and said to us: "He will never dare to be anything more than my friend; I am sure of it, and I will keep to that!"

Nevertheless one day she spoke to him about his mistresses, and asked had he ever been really in love. He answered that he had been with Madame de Chateauroux. "And with Madame de Pompadour?" "No," he said, "I never loved her." "Yet you kept her as long as she lived." "Yes, because to have sent her away would have killed her." This simplicity was not alluring; so Madame de Séran was never tempted to follow in the place of a woman whom the King had only kept out of pity. She was on these terms with him when she and I left everything to go with our sick and dying friend to take the waters.

Madame de Séran received regularly, by every post, a letter from the King, through the agency of Janel. These were confided to me, and also the replies, and have been since; as long as their correspondence lasted I was an eye-witness of the chastity of this relationship. The King's letters were full of expressions that were quite unequivocal: "You are only too respectable! . . . Allow me to kiss your hands. . . . Allow me, at this distance at least, to embrace you!" He spoke of the death of the Dauphin, calling him "our sainted hero," and saying that he missed her consolation in such a cruel loss. That was the language he used, and he would not have been at all willing to disguise the successful lover in that way. I shall have to speak elsewhere of the King's letters, and the impression they made on a mind less easy to persuade than mine. Meanwhile, I state here that the King was not sorry to find and savour the charm of a sentimental union, all the more piquant and gratifying because it was new, and which, without hurting his self-esteem, touched it where it was most sensitive.

Although the stir caused by "Bélisaire" and the celebrity of the "Moral Tales" in northern Europe had already made me remarkable enough amongst the crowd in which I lived, a quite creditable adventure drew fresh attention to me. One morning, passing in front of the large inn where the Ridotto was held, I heard myself called by name. I raised my head and looked at the window from which the voice came, and a man cried: "It is he!" and then disappeared. I had not recognised him, but at that instant saw him come out of the inn, run to me and embrace me, saying: "What a lucky meeting!" It was the Prince of Brunswick. "Come," he continued, "let me present you to my wife; she will be so pleased." And going to her rooms he said: "Madame, you wanted so much to know the author of 'Bélisaire' and the 'Moral Tales'! Here he is. Let me present him to you." Her Royal Highness, sister of the King of England, received me with the same joy and cordiality that the Prince showed. At that moment the town magistrates were waiting for them at the fountain to have it opened before them, and display the mass of pure sulphur formed in stalactites under the stone of the reservoir—an honour only shown to princely personages. "Go there without me," the Prince said to his wife; "I will spend the time more agreeably with Marmontel." I wished to refuse this favour, but had to stop with him at least a quarter of an hour, *tête-à-tête*; he spent it in talking enthusiastically of the writers he had seen in Paris, and his happy times with us. It was then that he told me that the most afflicting thought remaining from our intercourse was that he had to give up the hope of drawing us out of our country, and that no sovereign in Europe was rich or powerful enough to compensate us for the delight of living all together.

Finally, in order to urge him to go to the fountain, I was obliged to show a desire to see the opening myself, and so had the honour of accompanying him.

As they had to leave the next day, the Princess was kind enough to invite me to spend the evening with her at the Ridotto. She was dancing when I arrived, but stopped at once, although passionately fond of dancing, to come and talk to me. Until one hour after midnight, she, her lady-in-waiting (Mademoiselle Stuart) and I kept in our corner, entertaining ourselves with all that this amiable princess wished to hear from me. It is possible that her kindness deceived me, but I thought her very witty and charming. "How," I said to her, "how did they educate you to be so adorably natural? How little you resemble those of your rank that I have met!" "It is because," answered Miss Stuart, "at your court they educate princes to domineer, but at ours they teach them to please."

Before leaving, the Princess was so kind as to want me to promise to travel to England, when she would be there. "I will do the honours" (those were her words), "and will present you to my brother, the King, myself." I promised I would go to London unless some insurmountable obstacle prevented me; and I took leave of her and her excellent spouse, deeply moved by the tokens of their kindness I had received. I was not any prouder because of it, but I seemed to notice that the club at the Ridotto treated me with more consideration. It looks, my children, as if vanity made me tell you these things, but it is necessary for me to show how a little talent and simple honest behaviour gains one esteem everywhere.

M. de Marigny came back from his journey to Holland. He wished to take his wife with him to Paris, but Madame Filleul showed that it would give her pleasure if he left her daughter with her until the end of the season, not then very far off. He seemed to give in willingly to this desire of a sick mother, and as he wanted to see Spa on the way back, our two young ladies decided to accompany him; they all asked me to make this little journey. I don't know what presentiment made me insist on keeping with

Madame Filleul, but she herself forced me to go, persisting that she wanted to be alone. This unhappy trip began badly. Two Poles, who knew the young ladies, Messieurs Regewski, thought it would be a fine thing to go with them on horseback. M. de Marigny no sooner saw them caracoling by the door of the coach than he fell into a sombre humour, and from that moment the shadow on his mind grew larger and stormier. On arriving at Spa, however, he went to the Ridotto with us, but the more brilliant he found it, and the more he was struck by the kind of excitement our two young ladies caused, the blacker grew his ill-humour. But he would not humiliate himself by appearing jealous; he hit on a vaguer pretext.

At supper, as he was gloomy and taciturn, Madame de Séran and his wife pressed him to say what made him sad, and he answered at last that he saw only too well he was in the way; that after all he had done to make himself loved, he was not; that he was hated and detested; that Madame Filleul's request was planned; that they wanted to get rid of him; that they had only gone to Spa with him to amuse themselves there; that he was not duped by their charming manners; and that he knew his wife was only waiting until his departure. Then she spoke, saying he was unjust, that he had not shown the slightest pain at leaving her with her mother, that neither of them would wish to abuse his kindness, and although they had left her luggage at Aix-la-Chapelle, she was determined to go with him. "No, madame, stop here; it is too late; I don't want any sacrifices." "Certainly," she said, "it is one to leave my mother in the state she is, but it is one I am ready to make for you." "I do not want it," he said, rising from the table. Madame de Séran tried to soften him. "As for you, madame, I say nothing. I would have too much to say. Only I beg you not to meddle with what concerns my wife and myself." He went out abruptly, leaving the three of us in consternation. After taking counsel a moment, we decided his wife ought to go and find him. She was pale and in tears. In that state she would have softened the heart of a tiger, but he, for fear of weakening, had forbidden her entrance, and had ordered the post-horses to be harnessed to his coach at the very break of day.

Of all masters he was the most rigidly obeyed. His valet pointed out that he would be dismissed at once if he let madame enter, and that monsieur in his anger was capable of being carried to any lengths. We hoped that sleep would calm him a little, so I asked to be told the moment he awoke.

I had not slept, I hadn't even undressed, when they came to tell me that he was up. I went to him, and in the most moving terms described his wife's state. "It is acting," he said; "you do not know women: to my misfortune I do." The presence of his servants forced me to be silent; when he was ready to go, he took my hand and pressed it saying: "Good-bye, my friend, pity me—the unhappiest of men! Good-bye!" And with the air of one mounting the scaffold, he got into his carriage and departed. Then the sorrow of Madame de Marigny changed into indignation. "He repulses me: he wants me to rebel, and he will succeed. I was ready to love him—heaven is my witness! It would have been my happiness and glory to make him happy—but he doesn't want to be; he has sworn to make me hate him."

We spent three days at Spa, the young women in dissipating the sadness that had descended on their hearts, and I in meditating on the regrettable consequences our journey might have. I did not foresee the yet more cruel sorrow it was going to cause us.

As the blood purified itself in the veins of our invalid, there formed a scurf on her skin, all over her body, and this of itself dried and fell off in powder. This was her salvation, and the minute the scum of the blood began to spread outwardly, the doctor looked upon her as saved. But she, disgusted with this scurf, and finding the cure too slow, wished to hasten it; and, taking advantage of our absence, she coated her whole body with wax. As soon as the cutaneous exhalation of the humour stopped, the scab went back again, and we found the invalid in a more desperate state than ever. She wished to return to Paris; we could scarcely get her back there, and she just pined away.

To let her rest on the way, we travelled by short journeys. At Liège, where we had slept, I saw enter my room one morning a quite fine-looking burgher, who said to me: "Monsieur, I learnt yesterday evening that you were here. I am under great obligation to you, and I have come to thank you. My name is Bassompierre; I am printer-bookseller in this town; I print your books, for which I have a huge sale in Germany. I have already made four large editions of your 'Moral Tales'; I am doing the third edition of 'Bélisaire.' . . ." "What, sir," I said, interrupting, "you steal the fruit of my labour, and come and boast of it to me?" "Yes," he answered. "Your rights don't extend as far as here; Liège is a free country. We have the right to print whatever is good; that's how we do business. As no one steals from you in France, where you have rights, you will be rich enough. So do me the favour to come and breakfast with me; you will see one of the finest printing-works in Europe, and you will be pleased at the way your works are executed." To see this execution, I went to Bassompierre's. The breakfast that awaited me there was a collation of cold meats and fish. The Liègois received me with open arms. I was seated at table between the two Mademoiselles Bassompierre, who, pouring out Rhine wine for me, said:

"Monsieur Marmontel, why are you going to Paris, where they persecute you? Stop here and lodge with my papa; we have a beautiful room for you. We should take care of you; you could compose at your ease, and what you wrote in the evening would be printed in the morning." I was almost tempted to accept this proposal. Bassompierre, to compensate me for his pilfering, made me a present of the small edition of Molière that you read. It cost me ten thousand crowns.

At Brussels I was curious to see a valuable collection of pictures. The amateur who had formed it was, I believe, a Chevalier Vérule, a moody and melancholy man, who, convinced that a breath of air would kill him, kept himself shut up as if in a box. His collection was only open to important persons or to famous connoisseurs. I was neither of these, but after having got an idea of his character, I hoped to coax him to receive me well. I had myself announced. "Do not be surprised, Monsieur le Chevalier, that a man of letters who, in Paris, visits the most celebrated artists and amateurs of the arts, wishes to give them news of a man whom all esteem most highly. They will know I passed through Brussels, and would never forgive me if I did not see you and find out the state of your health." "Oh, monsieur, my health is very bad!" and he entered into details of his nervous troubles, his spleen, and the extreme weakness of his organs. I listened, and after telling him to husband his strength, I rose to take my leave. "What, monsieur! You would go without even glancing at my pictures?" "I am very ignorant, and not worth the trouble you would have in showing them to me." But I let him conduct me, and the first picture he asked me to look at was a very fine landscape by Berghem. "Ah!" I cried, "at first I thought it was a window through which I saw the countryside and those beautiful animals!" "That is the most wonderful praise ever given to this picture!" he cried delightedly. I showed the same surprise and delusion on nearing a glass cabinet, in which was enclosed a life-size picture by Rubens of his three wives; and then, one after the other, I appeared to get the most unusual impressions of truth from his pictures. He revelled in my surprise, and I let him enjoy it as much as he pleased—so much so, that he declared my instinct was a better judge of art than the knowledge of many who considered themselves connoisseurs, examining everything and feeling nothing.

At Valenciennes, curiosity of another kind almost got me into trouble. As we arrived early, I thought I would use the rest of the evening in walking on the ramparts to see the fortifications. While I was wandering around, an officer of the guard at the head of his troop came up to me and said bluntly: "What are you doing here?" "I am walking and looking at the fine fortifications." "Don't you know that it is forbidden to walk on these ramparts and examine them? Where do you come from?" "From Paris." "Who are you?" "A writer who, never having seen a place of war except in books, was curious to see one in reality." "Where are you staying?" I mentioned the inn and the three ladies I accompanied; also I told him my name. "You seem to be sincere," he said finally. "You can go." I did not have to be told twice.

As I recounted my adventure to the ladies, we saw the town major arrive. He was a former protégé of Madame de Pompadour, and had come to pay his respects to the sister-in-law of his benefactress. I found that he knew about what had just happened to me. He said I was lucky not to have been imprisoned; but offered to take me the next morning to see all over the place. I accepted gratefully, and had the pleasure of wandering round the enclosed fortifications at leisure and without danger.

A short time after arriving in Paris we had the sorrow of losing Madame Filleul. Death was never met more courageously or quietly. She was a woman of very unusual character—full of wit, and with a mind so penetrating, vivacious, and delicate, that it was like the glance of a lynx; there was no suggestion of guile or artifice in her. I never saw in her the illusions or vanities of her sex—she had its tastes, but simply and naturally, without whims and caprices. Her soul was alive, but calm; tender enough to be loving and kind, but not enough to be the plaything of her passions. Her affections were gentle, peaceful and constant; she yielded herself to them without weakness, but never with abandonment; she saw the things of life and the world as a game it pleased her to watch, and which one had to be able to play oneself occasionally, without being a cheat or a fool—so she said—and so she managed it, paying little heed to her own interests, but much to those of her friends. As to what happened, nothing astonished her, and in all situations she was composed and prudent. I suspect it was she who put Madame de Séran on the road to fortune, but she would only smile at the artlessness of the young woman, when she heard her say that, even in a king, were he king of the world, she did not want a lover whom she did not love. "They will make you," she said, "some kings you can fall in love with; and they will give you fortunes where all you have to do is to take what you please." "Really," the young woman said, "you would like me to be all-powerful, so that I had only to ask for what I wanted, but whilst you were amusing yourselves here, I would be bored up there, and die of vexation, like Madame de Pompadour." "Come, my child, let's be poor then," Madame de Filleul said to her. "Were I in your place I should be just as stupid." And we would eat our tough leg of mutton in the evening, making fun of worldly greatness. Thus, without fear at the sight of approaching death, she smiled at her friend, saying good-bye; and her decease was only a swooning away.

On my return from Aix-la-Chapelle I found the censure of the Sorbonne placarded up on the door of the Academy and on Madame Geoffrin's. But the porters in the Louvre seemed to have agreed to wipe their brooms on the writing. The censure and the injunction of the Archbishop were read in the pulpits of all the parishes of Paris, and scoffed at by everyone. Neither the Court nor Parliament had taken a hand in this affair; I was only told to keep silent; and "Bélisaire" continued to be printed and sold with the King's prerogative.

But a more distressing event than the Sorbonne decrees awaited me at Maisons, and when I arrived there I needed all my courage. I have spoken of Madame Gaulard's young niece, and of the delightful habit I had formed of passing two of the fine seasons with them—sometimes even the winter. Between the niece and myself this habit had changed to affection. We were neither of us rich, but, with the influence of our friend Bouret, nothing was easier than for me to procure, either in Paris or the provinces, a position good enough to make us comfortable. We had confided our hopes and desires to no one; but because of the liberty allowed us and the quiet trust Madame Gaulard had in our intimacy, we had no doubt she was on our side. Bouret, especially, seemed so delighted to see us on good terms that I was certain of him; and, as soon as I had brought back his dear friend in good health—as I hoped—I counted on inducing him to busy himself with my fortune and my marriage.

But Madame Gaulard had a cousin whom she dearly loved, and whose fortune was made. This cousin, who was also related to the young niece, fell in love with her, asked for her in my absence, and was accepted without any difficulties. She, too young and timid to say she cared for someone else, had pledged herself so far, that I only arrived in time to assist at the wedding. They were just waiting for the dispensation from Rome to go to the altar, and I, as an intimate friend of the house, was going to be the witness and confidant of everything. My situation was painful, but the young girl's was hardly less so, and however cheerful we resolved to be, I cannot imagine how our sadness did not betray itself to the aunt or the future husband. Happily the liberty of country-life allowed us to say some comforting words to each other, which gave us some of the courage we both needed so much. In such cases desperate love saves itself in the arms of friendship—that was our resource. So we promised each other to be friends all our lives; and when we were allowed to assuage our hearts in this way, we were not unhappy. But whilst waiting for the fatal dispensation from Rome, it was better for me to go away, and the occasion presented itself.

NINTH BOOK

ON my return I went to Maisons. This retreat charmed me; I loved everybody who lived there, and believed myself loved by them. I could not have been freer or more at ease in my own home. When any of my friends wished to see me they came to Maisons, and were welcomed. The Comte de Creutz was the one who appreciated it most, and who was happiest there, because, with all his rare qualities of mind, he was simple and good.

A grove near Alfort was the halting-place of our walks. There his soul expanded and unfolded. His capacity for emotion, the pictures that observation and study of nature had drawn in his memory, had been enriched by his imagination into a sumptuous gallery; the inspired thoughts that meditation brought to him, and which his mind poured so generously into mine—speaking of politics, morals, men or things, the sciences or the arts—all these held me spellbound and attentive for hours. The two objects of his idolatry—his country and his King, Sweden and Gustav—were the subjects with which he entertained me most eloquently and entrancingly. His enthusiasm and praise so took possession of my mind and senses that I would quite willingly have followed him over the Baltic Sea.

He had the most passionate love of music, and charity was the very soul of his virtues.

One day he came and implored me, in the name of our friendship, to hold out a helping hand to a young man who was, so he said, in despair and on the brink of drowning himself if I did not save him. "He is a musician, full of talent, and only wants an attractive comic opera to succeed in Paris. He comes from Italy, and has made several attempts in Geneva. He arrived with an opera written about one of your tales ('Le Mariage Samnite'). The directors of the Opéra heard it, but refused it. This unhappy young man is without resource: I have advanced him a few louis, but can do no more; and as a last favour he begged me to recommend him to you."

Until then I had never written anything approaching what I thought was my idea of a French poem analogous to Italian music; I did not think I even had the talent; but to please Comte de Creutz, I would have attempted the impossible.

I had on my table at the moment a story of Voltaire's (the "Ingénu"); I thought it would give me the groundwork of a little comic opera. "I will see," I said to Comte de Creutz, "if I can stage it, and develop the emotions and pictures most suitable for singing. Come back in eight days, and bring the young man with you."

The half of my poem was done when they arrived. Getry was enraptured, and went away to begin his work, whilst I finished mine. "Le Huron" was a complete success; and Getry, more modest and grateful than he has been since, thinking that his reputation had not been soundly enough established, entreated me not to abandon him. So then I wrote "Lucile." By the still greater success of this, I saw that the public was inclined to like plays somewhat similar to my "Tales" in character, and, with a musician and actors in a mood to respond to my aims, seeing that I could create pictures whose shades and colours would be faithfully represented, I myself took a keen liking to this sort of work; for I can say that, in raising the character of comic opera, I have created a new art out of it.

After "Lucile" I wrote "Sylvain"; after "Sylvain," "The Friend of the House," and "Zemire" and "Azor"; and success for both of us grew and grew. Work has never given me such pure enjoyment. My favourite actors, Clairval, Caillot, Madame la Ruette, were the head of their profession. Madame la Ruette would give us dinner. Then I read my poem and Getry sang his music. One or the other were approved by this little council, all was prepared to start work at the theatre, and, after two or three rehearsals, it was played.

The sincerity of our actors with regard to us was perfect; in their parts or in their singing they knew exactly what was needed; and they had a more infallible intuition for effects than we had ourselves. For myself, I never hesitated to defer to their advice; sometimes I was accused of being too ready to follow it. For instance, in between "Sylvain" and "Lucile" I had written a comic opera on one of my tales called the "Connaisseur." I read it to our small party. Getry was charmed, Madame la Ruette and Clairval applauded, but Caillot was cold and dumb. I asked him especially: "You are not pleased; speak freely; what do you think of what I've just read?" "I think," he answered, "that it is a lesser edition of the 'Métromanie,' and that to ridicule wit is not stimulating enough for a public such as ours, and that this play could very well have no success at all." So, going back to the fireplace, where the others were sitting, I said: "Madame and messieurs, we have all been stupid; Caillot alone is right." And I threw my manuscript on the fire. They cried out and said Caillot had made me do a mad thing. Getry wept with anguish, and when going away with him, he seemed to me so disconsolate, that when I left him I was sad to the bottom of my heart.

Eager to get him out of that state, I could not sleep, and the design and opening scenes of "Sylvain" were the fruit of that insomnia. In the morning I was writing them down when I saw Getry come in. "I have not closed my eyes the whole night!" "Neither have I," I said. "Sit down and liſten to me." I read my plot and two scenes. "This time," I added, "I am sure of what I'm doing. I will answer for its success." He grasped the two firſt songs and departed comforted. Thus was my leisure employed, and the product of this light labour enlarged my little fortune each year, but it was not large enough for what Madame Gaulard considered a suitable eſtablishment for her niece; so she gave her to another husband, as I have told you; and very soon that circle, cultivated by me with such care, was broken.

It was natural that "Bélisaire's" adventure had rather lessened Madame Geoffrin's intereſt in me, and that, becoming oſtensibly more devout, it pained her to have an author who was censured lodging with her. As soon as I noticed this I pretended that I wanted more comfortable lodgings. "I am extremely sorry," she said, "that I have nothing better to offer you; but I hope, although no longer lodging with me, you will not cease to be one of my friends and come to the dinners where they meet." After this audience of dismissal I did my utmoſt to get away from her house. An apartment exactly to my desire was offered me by the Comtesse de Séran, in a house that the King had given her. This enabled me to take up the threads of her romance.

On her return from Aix-la-Chapelle the King had received her better than ever, without daring more. However, the myſtery of their meetings and private talks had not escaped the watchful eyes of the Court; and the Duc de Choiseul, resolute in separating the King from every woman who was not his confidante, allowed himself to make several light and mocking remarks about her. Directly she heard this, she wished to silence him. A friend of hers was la Borde, the Court banker, devoted to the Duc de Choiseul, to whom he owed his fortune. At his house, and before him, she had an interview with the minister. "Monsieur de Duc, I have a favour to ask you. But first I want you to promise to be fair to me. I know you speak very slightingly of me; you think I am like the women who hope to possess the King's heart, and gain an influence over his mind that might vex you. I could revenge myself for your slander, but I would rather undeceive you. The King wished to see me; I did not refuse; we have had private conversations and unremitting friendship. You know all that; but what you do not know the King's letters will show you. Read them; you will see excessive kindness, but as much respect as tenderness and nothing at which I should blush. I love the King," she added; "I love him as a father; I would give my life for him: but King though he is, he will never make me deceive him, nor degrade myself by giving him what my heart neither can nor will."

After he had read the letters she handed him, the Duc de Choiseul wanted to throw himself at her feet. "Forgive me, madame. I am guilty, I confess, of having believed too lightly in appearances. The King is right: you are only too admirable. Now tell me what you demand of me, and what service the new lifelong friend you have just gained can render you?"

"I am about to marry my sister to an honourable soldier. Neither my parents nor myself can give her a dowry." "Good! Madame, it must be the King's charge to dower your sister; and I will obtain for her from the royal treasury a mandate of two hundred thousand crowns." "No, Monsieur le Duc, no; neither my sister nor I want money we have not earned and never can earn. What we ask is the position that M. de la Barthe's services have warranted, and the only favour we ask is that he gains preferment in rank before his fellow-officers." This favour was easily granted; but all that the King could make her accept was the little house in which she offered me a lodging.

But just as I was going to settle there, I was obliged to choose another, and this is how it happened. My old friend, Mademoiselle Clairon, having left the stage and taken a fairly large house on the slope of the Pont Royal, wanted to have me with her. She knew I had promised to go to Madame de Séran, but as she knew her to be kind and considerate, she went to her without my knowledge, and with dramatic eloquence recounted all the indignities she had to endure from the gentlemen of the chamber, and the brutal ingratitude with which the public had paid her services and talents. In her solitary retirement, the dearest consolation to her would be to have her old friend near her. She had a convenient apartment to hire; she was very sure I would accept if it I were not bound to occupy the one Madame la Comtesse had been so good as to offer me. She implored her to break this promise herself and ask me to go and lodge with her. "You are surrounded by all kinds of happiness, madame; and I have only what I can find in the continuing intimate society of an old friend. For pity's sake, don't deprive me of it!"

Madame de Séran was touched by her prayer. She suspected me of having consented to it—I assured her I had not. In fact, the lodging she had arranged for my convenience would have been much pleasanter: I would have been freer and two steps from the Academy. This nearness would have been of inestimable value in the bad weather of the year when, if I lodged with Mademoiselle Clairon, I would have to cross the Pont Royal. So I had not much trouble in persuading Madame de Séran that on all accounts it was a sacrifice they were asking of me. "Well," she said, "you must make this sacrifice; Mademoiselle Clairon has claims on you which I have not." So I went to lodge with my old friend, and from the very first days I saw that, with the exception of a small room at the back, my apartment would be uninhabitable for a studious man, because of the infernal noise made by carts and coaches on the arch of the bridge, just beside my head. It was the most used thoroughfare for bringing stone and wood into Paris. So night and day, without respite, the grinding of cart-wheels on the paving of a steep roadway, the stamping feet of the unfortunate horses, who had to climb and drag their loads up, the hideous cries of the drivers, and the more piercing noise of their whips, made me realise for myself what Virgil said of Tartarus:

Hinc exaudiri gemitus, et soeva sonare
Verbera : tum stridor ferri, tractaeque catenae.

But although this inconvenience was an absolute infliction, I let my dear neighbour see no signs of it; and as far as it was possible to be compensated for it by the most amiable and well-chosen society, I was, and all the time we lived in that house.

Often she saw the Duchesse de Villeroi, daughter of the Duc d'Aumont, who, when her father was persecuting me, showed me warmly her sorrow at seeing him so unjust and her inability to mollify him.

One evening, when she had just left my neighbour, I was surprised to hear the latter exclaim: "Well, Marmontel, you would never tell me who was the author of the 'Cinna' parody—at last I know it," and she mentioned Cury (at that time Cury, his mother and son were all dead). "And who told you that?" "Someone who knows—the Duchesse de Villeroi. She has just been, and you were the object of her visit. Her father wishes to see you." "Me! Her father, the Duc d'Aumont!" "He wants to see you about the performances he is ordered to give at court for the marriage of the Dauphin. 'But my father,' she said to me, 'would like Marmontel not to speak of the past.' 'Certainly!' I answered, 'Marmontel will never mention it! But he, madame, has he nothing to say of regret for having been so cruelly unjust to him? For depend upon it, he was really.' 'I know,' she said, 'and my father knows it too. The parody was by Cury; la Ferté told us: he heard him read it, but as long as the unhappy man was alive he wouldn't betray him.'" I was obliged to admit that what la Ferté said was true; and, curious to see what sort of face a man condemned by his own conscience would present to me, I agreed to the interview and went to his house.

I found him at a table with that same la Ferté, director of the Menus Plaisirs, examining the plan of some fireworks. As soon as he saw me come in he dismissed la Ferté; and disguising his uneasiness with vivaciousness he led me to his room. There, with a trembling hand, he pushed forward a chair and eagerly invited me to sit down. The Duchesse de Villeroi had said to Mademoiselle Clairon that her father was in difficulties over the court fêtes. The word came into my head, and to open the conversation I said: "Well, Monsieur le Duc, so you are in a great difficulty?" At this beginning I saw him go pale, but fortunately I added: "Over your entertainment at court." And he recovered from the shock my equivocal remark had caused. "Yes, in great difficulties. And I shall be so much obliged to you if you will help me." He babbled a great deal about the arduousness of such a commission; we ran through the repertories; he seemed to like my advice, and ended by asking if I had not some new work of my own in my portfolio. He had heard people speak of "Zemire and Azor"; he begged me to allow him to hear it read. I consented, but it must be to him alone. This was the object of a second meeting. His erudition extending as far as the "Contes des Fées," he recognised my subject as being the same as "Beauty and the Beast." "It would be impossible for me to give that play at the Dauphin's wedding," he said; "people would think it was a satire." It was he himself who had made it, but I did not enlighten him. What was strange in our two interviews was, that this feeble and vain soul had not the courage to show regret at having done an injustice, or wish, however futilely, to try and repair it.

About this time the Prince Royal of Sweden came on a visit to Paris; he already had a warm affection for the author of "Bélisaire," and had wished to correspond with me. He wanted to see me often and in private. I paid my respects to him; and when he heard of the death of his father, I was the only stranger he received in the first moments of his grief.

I can say that I have seen in him the rare example of a young man wise enough to be sincerely and profoundly grieved at being King. "What a misfortune," he said to me, "to be weighed down at my age with a crown and an enormous task for which I feel myself quite unfitted! I travelled to find the knowledge I needed, and here I am interrupted, compelled to return without having had time to learn, to see or to know men; and in future all intercourse, all faithful and sound relations are prohibited. I must say an everlasting farewell to friendship and truth." "No, sire," I said, "truth only flies from the kings who repulse her and will not listen to her. You love her, she will follow you; the tenderness of your heart and frank character make you worthy of friends: you will have them." "Men very rarely have them, kings never," he answered. "There is one," I said (showing him the Comte de Creutz, who was reading a despatch in a corner), "there is one who will never fail you." "Yes, he is a friend, and I depend on him; but he won't be with me; my affairs compel me to leave him here."

This short dialogue gives an idea of my conversations with this young prince. Every day I was more charmed with him. After having heard a few readings of the "Incas" he asked me through his envoy for a manuscript copy, and when the work was printed he allowed me to dedicate it to him.

That same year I made a very pleasant journey to Croix Fontaine, but it ended very unfortunately for me. All along the Seine in that part of the country there raged a poisonous and dangerously malignant fever. Many people had died at Saint Port and Saint Assise, and a great many servants were attacked by it at Croix Fontaine. Those who were not ill attended their comrades: my people did not spare themselves, and I went often to visit the sick—an act of humanity that was very useless. However, I believed myself to be entirely well, when they wrote to me from Paris to attend the Academy for the reception of the Archbishop of Toulouse, an assemblage that the King of Sweden was going to honour with his presence. The day following my arrival in Paris I felt stunned. Nevertheless, I attended the meeting of the Academy; I even read some parts of the "Incas," but in a faint voice, without expression or vigour. I had a success, but my prostration was noticed with much uneasiness. That evening the fever seized me; my servant was taken ill at the same time, and both of us were forty days between life and death. This was the first of my illnesses cured by Bouvart. He took care of me like a tender friend; and Mademoiselle Clairon during my convalescence was touchingly attentive; she read to me, and the idle fancies of the "Thousand and One Nights" were all that my weak brain could stand.

A short time after the Academy lost Duclos, and at his death the post of Historiographer of France was given to me without any solicitation on my part.

This mark of favour silenced my enemies at Court, and the Duc de Duras, who had not the same scruples about "Beauty and the Beast" as the Duc d'Aumont, asked me for "Zemire and Azor" for the performance at Fontainebleau in 1771. It had an unprecedented success; but not without having run the risk of being flouted. The "Friend of the House," which was given that same year at these entertainments, was very coldly received. Directly I felt the reason for this I remedied it, and it had in Paris the same success as "Zemire and Azor." These are very unimportant things, but as they interested me they will also have some amusement for my children.

When "Zemire and Azor" was announced at Fontainebleau, the rumour ran round that it was the tale of "Beauty and the Beast" put on the stage, and that the principal actor would walk on all fours. I let them talk, and kept quiet. I had given very detailed descriptions of the scenery and dresses, and had no suspicion that they wouldn't follow my directions. But neither the tailor nor scene-painter had taken the trouble to read my descriptions: they simply planned their work on the tale of "Beauty and the Beast." My friends were uneasy about the success of my play; Getry looked disconsolate, and Clairval himself, who had acted all my other rôles so sincerely, showed a disinclination to act this one. I asked him why. "How am I to make a part interesting when I have to be hideous?" "Hideous?" I said. "You won't be that at all! You must be terrifying at first sight, but there will be nobility and even grace in your ugliness." "Then go and see the beast's clothes they are preparing for me: for I have heard horrible things about them." This was the evening before the performance; there was not a moment to lose. I asked to be shown Azor's clothes, and had much trouble in obtaining this favour from the tailor. He told me not to worry, to leave the matter to him; but I insisted, and the Duc de Duras, ordering him to lead me to the storeroom, was kind enough to come with me. "Show the beast's clothes to this gentleman," the tailor said disdainfully to his lads. What did I see? Trousers like the skin of a monkey, with a long bare tail, a hairy back, enormous claws on the four paws, two great horns on the hood, and the most distorted mask with boar's fangs. I gave a cry of horror and protested that my play would never be given with this ridiculous and monstrous travesty. "What did you want then?" the tailor asked proudly. "I would have liked you to read my descriptions, and then you would have seen that I asked for the clothes of a man and not a monkey." "A man's clothes for a beast?" "And who told you that Azor was a beast?" "It is so in the tale." "The tale is not my work, and my work will not be put on in the theatre until all that is changed." "There is no more time." "Then I will go and ask the King not to allow this hideous performance to be given before him; and I will tell him the reason." Then my man subsided and asked what he should do. "The simplest thing in the world," I answered: "speckled trousers, shoes and gloves of the same, a purple satin dolman, a black waved wig, picturesquely dishevelled, and a terrifying mask, but not distorted nor like a snout." They had a lot of trouble in finding all that, as the store was empty, but by dint of obstinacy I got myself obeyed, and as to the mask, I made it myself out of pieces cut out of other masks. The next morning I made Clairval try on these clothes, and, looking at himself in the mirror, he thought it noble and imposing. "Now, my friend, your success depends on how you enter on the stage. If you are confused, or timid and embarrassed, we are lost; but if you come on proudly, with assurance showing yourself off well, you will impress them, and, that moment over, I will answer for the rest."

The scene-painter served me with the same carelessness as the impertinent tailor; and he would have quite missed the magic tableau, the most interesting moment of the play, had I not made good his blunders. With two ells of silver moire, to imitate the pier-glass, and two ells of light transparent gauze, I taught him how to produce one of the most charming theatrical illusions.

So by my own exertions, instead of the threatened shameful failure, I obtained a brilliant success. Clairval acted his part exactly as I wanted it. His proud and daring entry made the astonishing effect that was needed, and from then onwards I was reassured.

I must not pretend that the music didn't help marvellously to produce these effects. Getry's music was then what it has rarely been since; he did not realise how carefully I worked to plan the character, form, and design of a song to make it pleasant and easy for him. Usually musicians are fatuous enough to believe that they owe nothing to their poet: and Getry, with all his wit, had this stupidity in a supreme degree.

The ode in praise of Voltaire is almost of the same date. This is why it was written. Mademoiselle Clairon's circle was larger and more brilliant than ever. Discussions were keen there, particularly about poetry; and writers had as adversaries people of exquisite taste and highly cultivated minds. It was at one of these conversations on lyrical poets that I said the ode could not have with us the dignity and truth it had with the Greeks, for the reason that it no longer had the same function to fulfil; that only the bards of the Gauls had had a great destiny, because they were enjoined by the State to celebrate the glory of heroes.

"And what prevents the poets to-day," they asked me, "from assuming once more their ancient position and consecrating it to this public function?" I replied that if there were, as of old, feasts, solemnities, where the poet was listened to, the pomp of these great spectacles would stimulate his soul and genius. As an example I supposed the apotheosis of Voltaire, and in a vast theatre at the foot of his statue Mademoiselle Clairon reciting verses in praise of the illustrious man. "Don't you think that an ode designed for such solemn praise would take in the mind and soul of the poet a more truthful and livelier tone than one composed coldly in his study?" I saw that this idea made an impression, and an especially deep one on Mademoiselle Clairon. Then and there I decided to make an attempt to write the ode, which you will find in my collected poems.

Reading it, Mademoiselle Clairon felt that here her talent could enhance mine, and wished once again to lend my verse the illusionary charm she knew so well how to pour into them.

So one evening, when the company was assembled in the salon, she sent word that we should await her, and then, as we were speaking of Voltaire, a curtain parted suddenly, and there, beside a bust of the great man, Mademoiselle Clairon, dressed as a priestess of Apollo, a laurel crown in her hand, began to recite the ode as if inspired, and with divine enthusiasm. This little fête was the origin of a more solemn one which Voltaire witnessed.

A short time afterwards, Mademoiselle Clairon's lover, Comte de Valbelle, inheriting through the death of his elder brother, retired to enjoy his fortune in the town of Aix in Provence. Then the Prince of

Anspach fell in love with our beautiful princess of the theatre, and she had to take a larger and more convenient house than the one in which we lodged together. I went to live in the apartment reserved for me by the Comtesse de Séran, and there M. Odde spent a whole year with me.

I wanted to retire with him to Bort, and had in sight a small property a little diſtance from the town, where I was going to build myself a cell. Happily, the price of this property was so high that I could not afford it, and had to give up the idea. Therefore I let myself slip back into the social life of Paris, especially the society of women, resolved, however, to keep free of all ties that might trouble my peace.

I paid my court to the Comtesse de Séran as unremittingly as I could without being obtrusive. She was kind enough to want me to pass the spring-time with her in Normandy, at her little caſtle of la Tour, which she had redecorated. I went with her. What would I not have done for her? All the charm that an intimate friendship with a woman could have without love, I enjoyed with her. Certainly if it is possible to be hopelessly in love, I was with Madame de Séran, but she showed so candidly the limit of her own feelings, and how far mine could go, that even my desires never encroached beyond that.

I also had several pure and unaffected friendships with women who were growing old, but were ſtill lovable; women of whom Fontenelle would have said: "How clearly one sees that Love has touched them!" I hadn't the reverence for them that one has for virtue, but they inspired in me a feeling of kindness that bound me no less and gratified them all the more. It moved me to see declining beauty look in the mirror and fail to recognise itself. The one who was moſt tormented by this irrevocable loss was Madame de L. P——. She reminded me, in her melancholy, of a celebrated beauty of Greece, hanging her mirror in the temple of her goddess.

Madame de L. P——'s was the tenderest, most delicate and loving heart. Without claiming to compensate her for what the years had taken, I tried to console her with all the attentions of a reasonable and gentle friend, and she, like a tractable invalid, accepted any comfort that my ingenuity could offer her. She had even forestalled my advice by trying to distract her weariness through study, and this interest enlivened our leisure.

In the first radiance of her beauty no one had any idea that her mental gifts were equally fine. She did not know it herself. Absorbed in her other charms and dreaming only of their pleasures, her softness and indolence left sleeping in the depths of her mind a host of fine, true and delicate perceptions, which now, recollected in her sad leisure, flowered richly and of their own accord. In our conversations I saw them awake and expand with ease and grace. She inclined to my work and studies; she helped me in my research; but although her mind was occupied her heart was empty, and there lay her torment. All her tenderness concentrated on our friendship, and, within the limits suitable to her age and mine, this grew stronger and stronger. Whether in Paris or the country I was as constantly near her as possible. Often indeed I neglected for her circles where I was very happy, and I did for friendship what I rarely have done for love; but no one in the world loved me as much as Madame de L. P——, and when I said to myself, "Everyone else could miss me without a regret," I would unwaveringly have left all for her. My philosophical and literary friends were the only ones of which she was not jealous; any other of my pastimes pained her, and her reproaches touched me all the more because they were so timid and discreet and gentle.

During this time my work was divided between history and the Encyclopedia. I made it a point of honour and scruple to fulfil my functions as historiographer worthily. I wrote to the most important people of the period, to ask them to give me, from their collections, information relative to the reign of Louis XV., where I wished to begin; and I was myself surprised at the confidence they had in me. Comte de Maillebois sent all his father's and his own papers. The Marquis de Castries made me free of his library, which contained the memoirs of Maréchal de Belle Isle; Comte de Broglie initiated me into the mysteries of his secret negotiations; the Maréchal de Contades traced for me with his own hand the plans of his campaigns and the disaster of Minden. I wished to get the secrets of Maréchal de Richelieu, but was in disgrace with him, as were all the writers of the Academy. My peace was made by chance, and this was one more occasion when opportunity came to meet me.

At the same time, for the events of the Regency, I had the original manuscript of Saint Simon's "Memoirs," which I had been allowed to take from the office of Foreign Affairs, and from which I made vast extracts. But these extracts, and the plundering of all the despatches and memoirs that came crowding to me, would have been very fatiguing and wearisome if I had not had, intermittently, some literary occupation less arduous and more to my taste. A supplement to the Encyclopedia in four quarto folios was started, and I got relaxation through this.

You must know that after the publication of the seventh volume of the Encyclopedia, the succeeding part was stopped by a parliamentary decree, and only a small number of co-operators, of which I was not one, worked on it in silence. A painstaking compiler, the Chevalier de Jaucourt, had undertaken the literary part, and worked at it in his way, which was not mine. So when, by force of perseverance and prayers, the whole work was allowed to be brought out, and the project of a supplement was formed, one of those interested, Robinet, came to see me, and suggested that I should take up my work where it had been left. "You began only on the third volume, and stopped at the seventh: all the rest is by another hand: Pendent opera interrupta. We have come to ask you to finish your work."

As I was busy with the history it was impossible for me to promise to do any other work. "At least let us announce that you will give us some articles for the supplement." "I will do it if I have time: that is all I can promise." Some time afterwards he renewed the attack, and with him came the bookseller Panckoucke. They told me that, to put the accounts of their undertaking in order, they must know what salaries to pay their writers, and wanted to know what I asked for mine. "What can I ask? I have promised nothing, and not pledged myself to anything." "You will do what you please for us," Panckoucke said. "Promise only to give us some articles, and allow us to put this promise in our prospectus; for that we will give you four thousand livres and a copy of the supplement." They were so sure of me, that it spurred me to live up to their confidence. I did so well that they confessed that in the sequel I passed their expectations. But let us take up again the thread of events in my life, varied by so many accidents.

The death of the King had just made considerable changes at Court, in the ministry, and particularly amongst my friends.

M. Bouret had ruined himself to build and decorate a pavilion for the King at Croix Fontaine; and the King thought he was amply repaid by honouring him by a visit once a year when he was hunting: an honour that cost the unhappy man still more—being obliged to give the entire hunt a dinner, at which nothing was spared.

I had murmured many a time at his extravagance; but the most liberal and improvident of men had the fault of never listening to his real friends on this point of his expenditure. He had managed to exhaust his credit by building five or six houses on the Champs Elysées at great expense, when the King died without even having thought of saving him from ruin. This death leaving him overwhelmingly in debt, without help or hope, he resolved, I think, to rid himself of life: he was found dead in his bed. He was to his misfortune imprudent to madness, but he was never dishonest.

Madame de Séran was wiser. Having no longer, after the King's death, any prospect of favour or protection for herself or her children, she made the best use of the one gift she had accepted; the new director of buildings, Comte d'Angevilliers, suggested she could let him have her hotel at a suitable price, and she consented. So we were both of us dislodged in 1776, three years after she had granted me such pleasant hospitality.

The accession of the new King to the crown was followed by his coronation in the cathedral of Rheims. As Historiographer of France I was ordered to assist at this august ceremony. I will not repeat here what I have said in a letter printed without my knowledge, and which I have since put into my collected works; it is a feeble description of the effect of this wonderful spectacle on the fifty thousand souls I saw assembled. As for my own feelings, never have I been so moved.

Besides, on the journey I enjoyed all the pleasure my position could bring me, and I know I owe this to the kindness of Maréchal de Beauvais, captain of the military guard, and my colleague in the French Academy.

My letter on the coronation ceremony, printed and distributed to the Court by the commissioner of Champagne, had the effect of a picture recalling a day of glory and happiness to the King and Queen. It started in their minds a feeling of goodwill towards me. A little while after the Queen showed me favour. She wished to have "Sylvain" and "The Friend of the House" acted before her on a small stage, and this little performance gave considerable pleasure. The Queen, whilst passing in front of me, said with the most charming air: "Marmontel, that is delightful!" But these forecasts of favour were contradicted over the affair of the two kinds of music.

The Abbé Morellet and I had been for twenty years continually in the same circles, often of opposite opinions, but always in harmony over principles or sentiment, and full of respect for each other. In our liveliest disputes there was never a trace of bitterness or harshness. Without flattering each other we loved one another.

His brother, lately arrived from Italy, was quite a new friend for me; he gained my heart by his straightforwardness and sincerity. They lived together, with their sister, the widow of M. Leyrin de Montigny, who had just come from Lyon with her young daughter to adorn their home. The abbé, who had told me his happiness in the prospect of being united with his family, wrote to me one day: "My friend, to-morrow our womenfolk arrive. Do come and help me give them a good welcome."

Here my fate takes on a new complexion, and from this letter dates the chaste and unalterable happiness that awaited my old age, and which I enjoyed for twenty years.

TENTH BOOK

AS long as heaven left me, in Madame Odde, a tenderly cherished sister, whose love for me was like a daughter's rather than a sister's, and certain of having a real friend in her worthy and virtuous husband, whose house and children would be as my own, I knew where I could grow old in peace. Odde had acquired such esteem and trust, and his reputation was so excellent, that I was certain his advancement would be easy; and if he kept but the business he had in Saumur, my small fortune joined to his would allow us to live in honest comfort. So, when the world and I grew tired, weary one of the other, my old age would have an honourable refuge full of sweetness. Relying happily in this, I let myself go, as you have seen, down the stream of life, and saw my decline approaching without uneasiness.

But when I lost my sister and her children; when Odde, abandoning a town where he saw only graves, and giving up his work, retired to his own country, my future, so serene until then, grew dark and uncertain. All I saw before me were the dangers of matrimony, or the solitude of a sad bachelorhood and a lonely old age.

In marriage I dreaded the domestic worries that it would have been impossible for me to endure and not die, and I saw a thousand examples of this; but a still more terrifying unhappiness would be that of an old man, obliged to be an outcast in a world where he dragged around a weary and sickly decrepitude, or was left alone and deserted, at the mercy of his servants, handed over to their hard insolence and mean domination.

So in this painful situation I had tried more than once to find a companion and adopt a family in place of the one death had harvested; but by some lucky chance, none of my plans had succeeded when I saw the sister and niece of my friends the Morellets arrive in Paris. It was a gift from heaven.

However lovable they both seemed, the mother in her frank cordiality and kindness, the daughter in the candour and modesty that heightened her beauty, I did not imagine that with my more than fifty years I was a suitable husband for a young person who was scarcely eighteen. What dazzled me—the youthful blossoming, the radiance of beauty, and so many charms just on the point of developing—these were all enough to put away hope from me, and with hope, the desire to possess her.

So, for me, I saw in this pleasant happening nothing but the advantage of new and charming society.

Whether Madame de Montigny was prejudiced in my favour, or whether my good nature pleased her at first sight, she was soon as friendly with the friend of her brothers as if she had found an old friend of her own. We supped together. Their joy in being reunited animated that supper, and it was as if I belonged to them also. I was invited to dinner the next day, and eventually we formed the habit of seeing each other nearly every day.

The more I talked with the mother and heard the daughter speak, the more I found in both of them that lovable disposition that has always charmed me. But once again my age, the smallness of my fortune, prevented me from seeing any chance of the happiness I foresaw for the husband of Mademoiselle de Montigny; and more than two months passed before the idea came to me to aspire to that happiness myself.

One morning, a friend of mine and of the Morellets, the Abbé Maury, came to see me and said: “Shall I give you some news ? Mademoiselle de Montigny is going to be married." "She is going to be married ? To whom ?" "To you." "To me!" "Yes, to you yourself." "You are mad or dreaming!" "I am not dreaming, and it isn't madness; it is a very sensible thing, and not one of our friends doubts it."

"Listen to me," I said, "and believe me, for I am speaking seriously. Mademoiselle de Montigny is charming; I think her accomplished, and because of that alone, I have never been foolish enough to hope for the happiness of being her husband." "Well, you will be it without having hoped." "At my age ?" "Yes, at your age! You are still young and in good health." And then, behold, he expended all his eloquence in trying to prove to me that nothing was more suitable; that I would be loved; that we would make a fine couple; and with the voice of a prophet he announced to me that we would have beautiful children.

After this sally he left me to my reflections; telling myself all the while that he was mad, I began to be foolish also.

My fifty-four years did not seem such a terrible obstacle now; health, at that age, might take the place of youth. I began to think that I could inspire, not love, but a fine and tender friendship; and I recalled what the sages have said: "That friendship makes more happy households than love."

I thought I had noticed that this young and beautiful person had shown pleasure in seeing me, in hearing me speak; her lovely eyes, when looking at me, had something of interest and kindness. I went as far as thinking that in the attentions with which her mother honoured me, in the pleasure her uncles showed at my constant visits, there was perhaps an inclination in favour of the wish I dared not formulate. I was not rich, but one hundred and thirty thousand francs, solidly invested, was the fruit of my savings. Finally, if a sincere friend, the Abbé Maury, considered this union not only reasonable, but desirable from both sides, why should I think it so ill-matched?

I was engaged that day to dine with the Morellets. I went there with an emotion I had never had before. I even seem to remember that I took a little more care with my clothes; and then I gave serious attention to what was beginning to interest me intensely. Not a word was neglected, not a look escaped me; delicately I made advances, and gentle trials of their minds and hearts. The abbé seemed not to notice it; but his sister and brother and niece appeared to feel with me.

About this time the abbé took a trip to Brienne in Champagne, to the unhappy Lomenie, with whom he had been connected since his youthful days; and in his absence we became closer and more intimate.

I knew well that attraction at first sight may be deceived by charm; I knew the illusions created by grace and beauty; two or three months of acquaintanceship and companionship is a very little time to convince oneself about the character of a young girl. I had seen more than one in society whose sole education had been to pretend and deceive; but I had heard so much good of the disposition of this one, and her nature seemed so unaffected and pure and true, so far from any dissembling, or pretence or artifice; goodness, innocence and tender modesty were so visible in her manner and speech that I felt myself bound to believe in them, and if I could not have faith in such true-seeming, then I must doubt all, and never believe in anything again.

A walk in the gardens of Sceaux decided me. Never had the place seemed so beautiful, nor the country air so full of delight; Mademoiselle de Montigny's presence enhanced everything: I cannot explain the enchantment her glances spread around her. What I felt was not the delirium of the senses people call love; it was a calm voluptuousness such as pure spirits describe to us. Shall I say it? it seemed to me that for the first time I felt the real emotion of love.

Until then, pleasure of the senses had been the only attraction that led me; here I was raised above myself by more unconquerable charms; it was the candour, innocence, and gentle tenderness, chaste and timid modesty, and uprightness adorning this grace and beauty; it was the virtue in this blossoming youthfulness that charmed my soul even more than my eyes: a sorcery a thousand times greater than that of all the Armidas I had imagined I had seen in the world.

My emotion was all the intenser for being repressed. . . . I burned to confess it . . . but to whom? And how would it be received? Her kind mother gave me the opportunity. As we walked down a path she was a few steps from us with her brother. "It must be that I trust very much," she said smilingly to me, "to let you talk to my daughter alone." "Madame, I must repay you for that trust by telling you what we were talking about. Mademoiselle was describing the happiness you have in living together—the four of you. And I, who envy you, ask if a fifth, such as myself, for instance, would spoil the pleasure." "I do not think so," she answered; "but rather ask my brother." "I," said her brother frankly, "would think it very nice." "And you, mademoiselle?" She said: "I hope that my uncle, the abbé, will feel the same as my mother, but until he returns, let me keep silent."

As there was no doubt he would be of the same opinion, my intentions thus declared, and mother, brother and daughter being agreed, I dissembled no longer. And I think that the emotion that filled me unceasingly gained access to the heart of her who caused it.

We had to wait for the abbé, but at last he arrived; and although all had been arranged without his consent, he gave it. The contract was signed the next day. He made his niece his heir after his death and the death of his sister; and my only care in this deed, drawn up and written out by their notary, was to make my wife happy and independent of her children after my death.

No marriage was ever made with better omens. The trust between us was perfect and mutual, and as we both believed in the vow we were going to take at the altar, we pronounced it without any uneasiness or agitation.

On our return from the church, where the nuptial veil had been held over us by Chastellux and Thomas, they left us alone for a few moments, and these we used in assuring one another that each of us only desired the other's happiness. This first outpouring of two hearts joined together for ever by good faith on one side, innocence on the other, and on both the most tender friendship, is perhaps the most wonderful moment in life.

After dressing, the dinner was enlivened by the gaiety of our good old times. The guests were d'Alembert, Chastellux, Thomas, Saint Lambert, a cousin of M. Morellet, and several other mutual friends. All were interested in the young wife, and, like me, they were so charmed and glad, that to see them you would have thought each one was the bridegroom.

Rising from the table we passed into a galleried drawing-room, the decoration of which was made by the fine library of the Abbé Morellet. There a harpsichord and stands showed there was going to be music; but what entrancing music we were to hear!

The opera "Roland," the first French opera composed to Italian music, and played by the loveliest voices and finest musicians from the Opéra.

The pleasure this novelty aroused had all the charm of a surprise. Piccini was at the harpsichord; he animated the singers and orchestra with his own genius and mind. The ambassadors from Sweden and Naples came to this concert and were enraptured. Maréchal de Beauvais was also a guest. The enchantment lasted until supper, to which the singers and performers were invited.

And so this wonderful day passed—the epitome and prophecy of a happiness filling the rest of my life, rising above misfortunes that have often troubled us, and always incorruptible.

It had been agreed that we all should live together, the two uncles, the mother and ourselves; that we should pay a fifth of the expenses of the household, and this arrangement suited me on all accounts; it combined the advantages of domestic companionship and an already formed outside circle which we had only to enjoy.

I have introduced some of those we might call our friends, but there are still some of whom I did not want to speak just in passing, and on whom my memories like to rest. My children, you have heard your mother and her family say a thousand times what a pleasure it was for us to live with M. de Saint Lambert and Comtesse d'Houdetot, his friend; and how delightful it was to have a companionship where mind, and taste, and love of letters, and all the most essential and desirable qualities of heart attracted and held us, either near the sage of Eaubonne or in the pleasant retreat of Sévigné de Sanois. Never two minds and souls formed a more perfect harmony in thought and feeling; but especially they were alike in a loving eagerness to welcome their friends. A courtesy at once free, easy and regardful—an exquisite courtesy that came from the heart and went to one's heart, and is only known to tender souls.

We had belonged, Saint Lambert and I, to the fraternity of Holbach, Helvétius and Madame Geoffrin; in this last I dated further back than he: I was almost the oldest member of that circle.

It was at a town ball—a strange enough fact—that I met Madame Necker: she was young then, quite pretty with a dazzling freshness, and dancing badly but heartily. She had scarcely heard my name when she came up to me, and with an artless delight, said: "On arriving in Paris one of my desires was to know the author of the 'Moral Tales.' I did not think I would make such a lucky meeting at a ball. I hope it is not just a transient pleasure. Necker," she called to her husband, "come and join with me in persuading M. Marmontel, the author of 'Moral Tales,' to pay us the honour of a visit." M. Necker was very polite in his invitation, and I went to see them. Thomas was the only writer they knew before me; but soon, in the beautiful house they had settled in, Madame Necker, taking Madame Geoffrin as a model, chose and formed her circle.

A stranger to the ways of Paris, Madame Necker had none of the agreeableness of a young Frenchwoman. Her manners and speech had neither the tone nor the air of a woman educated by art or formed in a social world. Without taste in dress or ease in bearing, with no charm in her civility, her mind, like her face, was too exact to be graceful.

But she had the worthier charm of candour, decency and kindness. A virtuous education and solitary studies had given her all that culture could add to a soul of a naturally excellent disposition. Her emotions were blameless, but her thoughts were often confused and vague. Instead of clarifying her ideas, meditation disturbed them: by exaggerating she thought she was enlarging them, and to broaden them she wandered into abstractions or hyperbole. Certain things she seemed unable to see except through a mist that magnified them, and then her words were so inflated that it would have been laughable had one not known how ingenuous she was.

Taste was less a matter of feeling with her than the result of opinions collected and transferred to notebooks. Without her quoting these examples it was easy to see by whom or what her judgment had been formed. In writing she admired only exultation, majesty and magnificence. Gradations, shades, variety in colour or tone touched her lightly. She had heard the artlessness of la Fontaine and the naturalness of Sévigné praised; she spoke of them by hearsay, but felt them little herself. She did not know the elegance of carelessness, of ease and abandon. Even in conversation familiarity displeased her. I amused myself often by watching how far she would carry this delicacy. One day I quoted to her some common expressions which might, I thought, quite well be accepted in lofty writings: as to make love, to go and see his lady-love, to begin to see clearly; make up your mind; to do well you must; seest thou; let us do better, etc. She rejected these as unworthy of a noble style. I said: "Racine was less difficult to please than you. He has used all those." And I showed her examples. But her mind, once made up, was unshakable; and the authority of Thomas or Buffon was an article of faith with her.

One might say that she kept soundness and correctness for the ruling of her duties; there everything was precisely and severely arranged; even in her amusements she desired reason and method.

One could see that she wished to be agreeable socially; eager to welcome cordially everyone she had invited, and careful to say what would most please: but it was all premeditated; nothing flowed naturally—we were never deceived.

It was not for us, nor for herself, that she took all this trouble, but for her husband. To make him known to us, to propitiate our minds in his favour and make us praise him in society, this was the principal object of her starting a literary circle. But as well, her salon and dinners must be a relaxation and amusement for her husband; and, in fact, he was only a cold and silent onlooker. Outside a few shrewd words now and then, he was a dumb fellow, and left the trouble of keeping conversation going to his wife. She did her best, but her mind was not capable of engaging table-talk. There was never a sally, never a lively word, never a flash to rouse our wits. Anxious and uneasy, as soon as speech languished, her glances searched our eyes to find the cause. Sometimes she was even simple enough to complain of it to me. "What is to be done, madame?" I said. "One isn't witty just when one wants to be, and one isn't always in a mood to be amiable. Look at Monsieur Necker. Is he always amusing?"

All Madame Necker's civilities and all her desire to please us could not overcome the dislike to be invited to her dinners simply to amuse her husband. But sometimes it was with these as with many others, when the company, enjoying itself, forgave the host for not being amiable, if he forgave it for not troubling about him.

When Necker was made minister, those who had not known him in his private life attributed his silence and gravity, his lofty air, to pride in his new position. But I can testify that even before he had made his fortune, and was just partner to the banker Thelusson, he had the same air, the same silent, grave disposition, and that he was not more affable or familiar with us.

He received his guests politely, but he had none of the flattering cordiality that gives politeness the appearance of friendship.

His daughter has said of him "that he knew how to keep his world at a distance." If that had been her father's intention, in saying so she was thoughtlessly betraying the secret of a rather ridiculous pride. But the simple truth was that a man, accustomed from his youth to the mysterious workings of a bank, plunged into calculations of commercial speculations, knowing little of society and seeing little of men, very little of books, superficially and vaguely educated in what did not concern his position, must, out of discretion, prudence and self-respect, be reserved, so as not to give himself away: for he spoke fully and freely about what he knew well, but sparingly of everything else. So he was wise and shrewd, and not arrogant. His daughter is sometimes a lovable giddy-pate.

With regard to Madame Necker, amongst her friends she had some she distinguished, and I was always one of these. Our minds and tastes were not very much in harmony; indeed, I was fond of opposing my simple and common ideas to her lofty conceptions, and she had to descend from her inaccessible heights to communicate with me. But although intractable about following her into her thought-country, and more governed by my senses than she liked, she was fond of me none the less.

Her circle had one precious delight for me—that of finding the ambassadors of Naples and Sweden in it—two men whose absence and loss I have most regretted. One, by his good nature and cordiality as much as his tastes and enlightenment, made our intercourse every day more desirable. The other, by his tender friendship, his gentle philosophy, by I do not know what fragrance of unaffected virtue and modesty, and something indescribably melancholy and endearing in his speech and character, attached himself even more closely to me. I saw them at my home, at theirs, at my friends, as often as possible, but never enough to please me.

Happy in my social life, still happier in my home, I was expecting, after eighteen months of marriage, my wife's first confinement as the chiefest of all my desires. But, alas! my hopes were cruelly deceived! This longed-for child was born dead. Its mother, surprised and uneasy at not hearing its cries, asked to see it; I, trembling and motionless, was still in the neighbouring room, awaiting her deliverance, when my mother-in-law came to me and said: "Come and kiss your wife and save her from despair; your child died whilst being born." I thought my heart would die of this blow. Pale and icy-cold, hardly able to stand, I dragged myself to my wife's bedside, and with a great effort said: "My sweet friend, now is the time to show that you live for me. Our child is no more. He died before he saw the light." She gave a cry that pierced my heart, and fell fainting into my arms. As she will read these memories, let us pass over those cruel moments, so as not to reopen her wound, which has bled only too long.

With her second child she was determined to nurse it herself, but I objected, as I thought she was still too weak. The nurse we had chosen was, by her looks, the best possible: her air of health, her freshness and colour, rosy lips and beautiful teeth and fine bosoms—she had everything except milk. Her breasts were of marble, and the child dwindled away. He was at Saint Cloud and, whilst waiting until his mother was in a fit state to go and see him, the village curate had promised to watch over him and give us news; but the heartless creature misled us.

Arriving at the nurse's house we were sadly enlightened. "My child is suffering," his mother said to me; "look how his hands are fading! He looks at me with eyes that implore pity. I insist that this woman brings him to Paris and that my accoucheur sees her." She came and the doctor was called; he examined her breasts and found no milk. Immediately he went to find us another nurse; and as soon as the infant took this fresh breast from which he could draw bountifully, he found the milk so good that he could not have enough.

How glad we were to see him revive before our eyes like a dying withered plant that has been watered. This dear child was Albert, and we seemed to feel a presentiment of the comfort he was going to bring us.

My wife, in order to keep the nurse near her and to give the child pure air, wished to have a house in the country, and a friend of M. Morellet lent us his at Saint Brice.

In this village there were two excellent men, with whom I was soon associated. One was the vicar, an elder brother of the Abbé Maury, a man of wise mind and fine character; the other was a former bookseller called Latour, gentle, quiet and modest, of an exquisite integrity, and as kind to me as he was charitable to the villagers. His library was mine.

I worked at the Encyclopedia. I rose with the sun, and having spent eight or ten hours of the morning in writing down the crowd of notes I had made during my studies, I gave the rest of the day to my wife and child. He was already our delight.

As the good milk of our young Burgundian put health into his veins, we saw his little body and delicate limbs grow firmer and rounder; we saw his eyes light up, and his face become beautiful and full of colour. We thought, too, that we saw his little soul develop and his intelligence unfold. Already he seemed to understand and recognise us; his voice and smile answered to his mother's, and he delighted in my caresses. Soon his tongue tried to say the first words of humanity, those sweet words which, from the lips of a child, go straight to the father's and mother's heart.

I shall never forget the moment when, in the garden of our little house, my child, who had never dared to walk without his leading-strings, seeing me on my knees a few steps away from him, holding out my hands, broke from the arms of his nurse, and on staggering but determined feet came and threw himself in my arms. I know perfectly well that my emotion at that moment was a pleasure that kind nature has made very prevalent; but woe to those hardened hearts that can only be touched by rare and unreal impressions! A woman friend of ours said humorously of me: "He thinks no one else in the world has ever been a father!" No, I don't pretend that paternal love is especially dear just to me, but if this common happiness had been given to me alone, I could not have felt more deeply grateful. My wife was as happy in being a mother, and you can imagine that when near our child, neither of us desired any other sight or society in the world.

However, our family and several of our friends came to see us on holidays. Abbé Maury was one of them, and you should have heard how he extolled himself for having foretold my happiness.

Also we saw our neighbours sometimes, the vicar of Saint Brice, and good Latour and his wife, who loved mine. Often we took lonely walks, and the goal of these excursions was usually the chestnut grove of Montmorency, that Rousseau had made famous.

"It was here," I told my wife, "he dreamed his romance 'Héloise,' in which he paints vice in the colours of goodness and virtue with so much art and eloquence." My wife had a weakness for Rousseau;

she was infinitely thankful to him for having persuaded women to nurse their children, and for his care in trying to make the first stage in life a happy one. "We must be forgiving to him who has taught us to be mothers."

But I, who had seen in the conduct and writings of Rousseau only the perpetual opposition of fine language and bad manners; I, who had seen him announce himself as the apostle and martyr of truth, and make sport of it unceasingly with the cleverest sophistries; deliver himself through calumny from the burden of gratitude; in his savage moods and sinister visions use the falsest colours to traduce his friends; vilify the writers he had most cause to praise in order to distinguish himself and wipe out all others—I made my wife feel, by the good he had done, all the evil he could have prevented himself from doing, if, instead of using his art to serve his passions, to enhance his hates and vengeances and cruel ingratitudes, and to give his slanders plausibility, he had striven to tame his pride, his irascible moods, his dark defiance, and sad animosities, and become again what nature had made him, innocently sensitive, sincere, and just and good.

My wife listened to me mournfully. One day she said to me: "My friend, I am sorry to hear you speak ill of Rousseau so often. You will be accused of some personal animosity against him, and perhaps of a little envy." "As for any personal feeling in my dislike, that would be very unjust; for he has never offended me or done me any wrong. But that there is envy would be more possible, for I admire his writings enough to be envious of them, and would accuse myself of it if I caught myself slandering him; but, on the contrary, I feel the bitter sadness you do, in speaking of his soul-sickness." "Then why," she continued, "do you treat him so severely in your writings and your speech? Why insist on his vices? Is it not impious to trouble the ashes of the dead?" "Yes, the ashes of the dead who have left not a single pernicious example or memory to the living, but the delectable poison in the writings of an eloquent reasoner and seductive corrupter, the baleful impression he makes on the mind with his plausible calumnies, and all the infection left by a famous mind, is this to be passed over because of the respect paid to the dead, to perpetuate itself from age to age? Certainly I will combat it with preservatives or counter-poisons or any means in my power; and, if it were only to wash away the stains with which he has sullied the memories of my friends, I will leave to what disciples and enthusiasts he still has the choice of thinking that Rousseau was wicked or mad. They will accuse me of envy: but so many illustrious men, to whom I have given the truest and purest homage, will testify that envy has never darkened truth and justice in my writings. I spared Rousseau while he lived because he needed his fellow-creatures, and I did not want to injure him. He is no more; I owe no consideration to the reputation of a man who was never careful of anyone's, and who in his memoirs has libelled the people who loved him best."

If I had had a craving for fame, two great examples, Voltaire and Rousseau, would have cured me: very different examples, opposite in many respects, but alike on one point, that the thirst for celebrity had been the torment of their lives.

Voltaire, whom I had just seen die, sought glory by every road open to genius, and deserved it for his immense work and dazzling success; but on each road he met envy and all the furies escorting her. No writer has ever endured so many outrages for no other crime than his great gifts, and his desire to make them eminent. People thought they were his rivals when they were only his enemies; and those he trampled under foot insulted him again with their filth. His whole life was a struggle, and he was untiring. The fight was not always worthy of him, and he had many more insects to crush than serpents to strangle. But he could never disdain to notice an insult; the vilest of his aggressors were blasted by his hand; ridicule was his instrument of revenge, and he made a dreadful and cruel game of it. But the greatest of all good things, rest, was unknown to him. It is true that at last envy seemed to tire of pursuing him, and spared him on the edge of the tomb. On the journey he was allowed to make to Paris after a long exile, he enjoyed his fame, and the enthusiasm of a people grateful for all the amusement he had given them. The last and feeble effort he made to please, "Irène," was applauded as "Zaïre" had been; and this performance, when he was crowned, was for him his most splendid triumph. But at what a moment this consolation had come—this prize for so much wakefulness! The next day I saw him in bed. "Well," I said, "are you satiated with glory?" "Oh, my friend, you speak to me of glory when I am on the rack, and dying in fearful torment!"

Thus ended one of the most illustrious men of letters, and one of the most lovable. He was sensitive to insults, but also to friendship, and that with which he had honoured my youth was the same until his death: the last sign he gave of it was his welcome, full of grace and kindness, to my wife. His house was never empty of people coming to see him, and we saw how he wearied himself to respond suitably to each. This continual strain exhausted his strength, and was a painful sight to his real friends. But we came to his suppers and received the last glimpses of this spirit as it grew dim.

Rousseau was unhappy too, and through the same craving; but Voltaire's ambition had a basis of modesty—you can see that in his letters—whereas Rousseau's was made up of pride; the proof is in his writings.

I have seen him welcomed and esteemed in a company of the most distinguished writers, but it was not enough for him; their fame obscured his, and he believed them to be jealous. He suspected their kindness. He began by doubting, and finished by slandering them. In spite of himself, he had friends: these friends were kind to him, and their generosity was irksome to him. He accepted their benefits, but accused them of wishing to humiliate, dishonour and debase him; and the most detestable slander was the reward of their benevolence.

In the world he was always spoken of with considerable interest. Even criticism was full of regard for him and softened by praise. Said he—it was all the more cunning and perfidious. However free from disturbance, he would always believe he was, or say he was, persecuted. His foible was to imagine some wish to harm him in any chance happening or the most ordinary circumstance—as if all the envious eyes in the world were fixed on him. Had the Duc de Choiseul conquered Corsica it would have been to deprive him of the glory of being legislator. If the same duke went to sup with the Maréchale de Luxembourg at Montmorency, it was to usurp his usual place near her at table. According to him, Hume had been jealous of the reception the Prince of Conti gave him. He could not forgive Grimm for having some precedence over him at Madame d'Epinay's, and it is seen in his memoirs how his fierce vanity revenged itself on this offence.

So, for Voltaire and for him life had been perpetually, but differently, agitated. For one it had often had very poignant pain, but very keen delights; for the other it had been nothing but floods of bitterness with hardly any mixture of joy or sweetness. Certainly at no price would I have been in Rousseau's condition: he could not endure it himself, and after having poisoned his days, I was not at all surprised that, of his own will, he cut short his mournful existence.

And I confess I think Voltaire paid too dearly for his glory with all the tribulations he had to endure; therefore I say again: "Less splendour and more tranquillity."

Restrained in my ambition, first by the necessity of measuring my flight by the weakness of my wings, and then again by my love of the tranquillity of mind and soul that goes with quiet work, and which I believe to be the part of humble mediocrity—I would have been content to live in that happy state. So renouncing early presumptuous attempts, I had, as one might say, come to terms with envy, and confined myself to the order of writing whose success may be pardoned without vexation. Nevertheless I was not spared; and my experience proved that little things find cause for evil malice in little minds.

But I had made two principles for myself: one, never to provoke injury by being insulting in my writings; the other, to despise attacks on my work and never to reply to them. For thirty years I was steadfast in this resolution; and all the rage of Fréron, Pallisot, Linguet, Subert and their like could not move me against them.

My sojourn at Saint Brice was marked by an event of a more serious interest; this was the retirement of M. Necker, Minister of Finance. I have already said that his character was anything but bewitching. He had never given me any grounds for thinking of him as my friend: I was not his; but as he showed me as much consideration and kindness as I could expect from a man so coldly polite, and as I, for my part, had a high opinion of his talents and abilities and his ambition to gain eminence in his poſt by serving the State well, I was grieved at his retirement.

Besides, I had for Madame Necker the moſt sincere reverence, for I had seen in her only goodness, wisdom and virtue; and the special affection with which she honoured me deserved that I should feel concern in an event which doubtless affected her very deeply.

When I heard of it at Saint Brice, thinking they had already retired to their country house at Saint Ouen, I went there forthwith. They had not yet arrived, and continuing along the road, I went on to find them in Paris, but met them on the way. "You have come to see us ?" said Necker. "Get into our coach and come with us to Saint Ouen." I accompanied them. We were alone all the evening with Germain, Necker's brother. Neither husband nor wife hid their deep sadness from me. I tried to lessen it by speaking of the regret they would leave in the mind of the public, and of the true respect that would follow them in their retirement, in which I did not flatter them. "I only regret the good I had yet to do and which I would have done had they given me time," said Necker.

For my part I saw in his situation juſt an honourable retirement, an independent fortune, reſt and liberty, any occupation he chose, and a society that was not drawn by favour, or banished by want of favour; and in his household all the charm that private and domeſtic life can have for a wise man. But I acknowledge that I speak according to my taſtes and not his, for I believe he could not be happy without public affairs and the power they give. His wife seemed grateful for the trouble I took to soften the effect of the blow he had had. So I was drawn closer to them by this event.

My wife, for my sake, responded to their attentions and invitations, but she had an aversion from M.

Necker which she could not overcome. She had brought from Lyon the conviction that he was the cause of M. Turgot's disgrace, and the latter had been a benefactor to her family; and she did not find in Madame Necker the attractive manner which she and all her friends had.

I come back to Saint Brice, and the dear interest that filled our days, for my wife was at that time expecting another child. The fine air, exercise and regular country life was good for her, and when winter brought us back to Paris, she was delivered of the most beautiful of our children. Thus, everything seemed to prosper for us once more, and nothing could have been more serene than the life we led.

In speaking of former acquaintances, I have said that I had met M. Turgot; but whether our habits and characters did not tally or my connection with M. Necker displeased him still more, he never was anything but cold to me. Nevertheless, as an old friend of Abbé Morellet he had been present at my marriage, and I owe him several kindnesses to my wife; I responded to these with all the more respect because he was in disgrace and felt it profoundly.

One by one I lost my old friends. The Swedish Ambassador, recalled by his King to be his Confidential Minister, was taken from me for ever. The Neapolitan Ambassador left us to become Viceroy of Sicily. Both separations were all the more painful to me in that they were irrevocable.

Caraccioli's letters were full of his sadness. He was always asking me to go to Sicily with my family, and offered to send a vessel to Marseilles to bring us to Palermo.

I have told you what, for forty years, was my friendship for d'Alembert, and what value I put on his. Since the death of Mademoiselle l'Espinasse he had been wasted by sadness and weariness; yet sometimes he allowed the balm of consoling friendship to flow into his heart's deep wound. My wife, above all, could divert him from his trouble, and she was tenderly eager to do this for him. He and Thomas, the two writers whose talent ought to have overawed her, were the ones with whom she was most at ease. There was no amusement she liked better than to talk with them.

It seemed as if Thomas had yet many more years to live for fame and friendship; but d'Alembert began to feel the excruciating pain of stone in the bladder, and soon his life was only a torment of suffering and slow dying.

In a feeble sketch in praise of him, I tried to express his sweet equanimity; always true and simple because he was natural, his character was free from all boasting and pretence, a mixture of strength and weakness, but the strength was virtue and the weakness benevolence.

Whilst mourning him, I little thought that I should succeed him in being Permanent Secretary to the French Academy. I was myself on the point of following him into the grave, stricken by the same malignant fever from which Bouvart had already saved me, and which he cured once more. How I ought to bless the memory of the man who twice saved my life, and who took the tenderest care of my children until his mind and strength failed!

Whilst dining with Madame de Beauvau, we heard for the first time of the notion of giving me the position of Secretary to the Academy, a post which d'Alembert had made so difficult to fill after him.

This difficulty, which would have intimidated the vainest man, was not the only one that withheld me. The position demanded an unremitting attention of which I felt myself incapable. So quite sincerely I refused the honour they wished to pay me; but they produced such reasons for yielding, that it was decided

I should be amongst the aspirants—but only on the condition that I need not solicit for it.

Circumstances favoured me with the Court votes. "Dido" was a complete success, and mingled with the eulogies over Piccini's music were a few words of praise for the author of the poem. The King said: "It is the only opera that has interested me." And he commanded two more performances.

This success touched me very much; my wife enjoyed it, and that pleased me most. The trip had been unutterably delightful for her. The excursions in the forest, the hunt meets and horse racing, the picnics to Tomery, where for dinner they gave us the most sumptuous fish boiled in wine, and excellent grapes; and whenever there was a performance, seats in Madame d'Angevilliers' box. She had made her house ours, and vied with her husband in the charming grace with which she introduced us to the many fine friends who surrounded her unceasingly: in a word, all the entertainments of a youthful and magnificent court, and all that showed my wife that she was personally esteemed and cherished by the Court circles: all this made our stay at Fontainebleau a continual enchantment for both of us.

ELEVENTH BOOK

ON our return to Paris, the French Academy having been convoked for the election of a permanent secretary, I mustered eighteen votes out of twenty-four. My two competitors were Beauzée and Suard.

"Dido" had the same success at Paris as it had had at Court; and it was one of our winter's pleasures, just as "Roland" and "Alys" had been when they were new.

The former Court banker, M. de la Borde, gave concerts also, as well as those of Comtesse d'Houdetot and Madame de la Briche: and this was how I became acquainted with him.

He had two daughters who had been gifted with beautiful faces and lovely voices; they were pupils of Piccini, and their singing made his songs even more touching and sweet.

Prejudiced in M. de la Borde's favour by his courtesy, I went to see him and dined sometimes with him. I found him honourable but simple, enjoying his prosperity without pride or boasting, and with an equanimity of mind that was all the more praiseworthy, as such fortune must have been difficult to bear without a slight giddiness. How much heaven had given him! Enormous wealth, a universal reputation for loyalty and uprightness, the confidence of Europe and unlimited credit; and in his home six healthy children, a wife whose spirit was wise and gentle, her disposition amiable and of an unstudied propriety and modesty—an excellent wife and an excellent mother—such as envy itself found faultless: *Che non trova l' invidia ove l' emende* (Ariosto).

What more could a man so completely happy desire? He perished on the scaffold—for no other crime than his wealth—with a host of honest people sent to their death by a vile wretch. This awful calamity threatens us no longer, and I feel happy in my humble mediocrity. My country house was pleasanter to me than town had ever been.

A small circle of friends, chosen to my wife's liking, came one after the other to vary our leisure and enjoy the ample riches of the countryside with us; and in our garden—the wall fruit, and orchard fruits, the vine and herbs—these provided frugal repasts so cheaply, yet changed a modest dinner into a delicious feast.

An innocent joy, a trust and security reigned there; a liberty of thought within recognised limits which were never overborne.

Shall I name for you all the guests that friendship gathered there? Raynal, the most affectionate and liveliest of old men; Silesia, the Genoese philosopher, who was like Vauvenargues; Barthélemy, who, during our walks, made me think of Plato with his disciples; Bréquigny, who also had the antique wisdom and urbanity; Carbury, a man of every period and every country in his varied wealth of mind and erudition; Boismont, quite French in his habits, but singular in the contrast between his attraction in the world and his gifts in the pulpit; Maury, prouder of amusing us with a charming story than amazing us by a flash of eloquence, and making us forget his greatness in his lovableness; Godard, who, too, had the whimsicality of a witty gaiety; Desèze, who came presently to give our converse greater scope and delight. "We are too happy," my wife said to me; "some misfortune will happen." She was right! My children, sorrow is near to joy in all life's circumstances. . . .

"A period in some respects unique in human history."
SIR EDMUND GOSSE on the EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

The BROADWAY LIBRARY of
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH LITERATURE

Edited by RICHARD ALDINGTON

With a General Introduction by SIR EDMUND GOSSE

THE object of this series is to provide a collection of works illustrating the different aspects of eighteenth-century French life, literature, and thought. From this rich and varied period a choice has been made of those books which are most attractive to modern taste. Novels, stories, plays, poems, pamphlets, letters, confessions, memoirs—the current of the age flow through them all.

In all cases the books have been chosen for their intrinsic interest to us to-day—as pure literature, as striking examples of a stage of European thought, or as illustrating the life of the eighteenth century. The memoirs are rather personal than merely historic, certainly represent the Court, but also especially aim at revealing life in other classes. Incidentally, the Library illustrates the growth of opinion which culminated in the Revolution.

The series is printed in a Caslon type, with the preliminary pages in two colours. The volumes are bound in green buckram with gilt lettering and coloured tops.

Published by

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.
Broadway House, Carter Lane, London, E.C. 4

EXTRACTS FROM REVIEWS

Morning Post.—"Here they have, in dignified and yet readable form, beautifully printed, capably edited, and quite admirably translated, typical specimens of a literary period that is immensely significant and inexhaustibly interesting. The Eighteenth Century in France marked the supremacy of the influence of polite society on literature. It was also marked by a burst of intellectual and emotional energy to which the Renaissance in this country alone is comparable. Such books deserve an honourable *format*, and they have found it in the Broadway Library which, when complete, will be a covetable addition to any discriminating reader's bookshelves."

Times Literary Supplement.—"These attractive-looking volumes usher in what should be an engaging and useful series of translations from eighteenth-century French literature. The renderings are by competent hands, and there is certainly a piquant variety in the choice of the first three books."

Sunday Times.—"These first three volumes have laid English students of history and letters under a genuine obligation to the enterprising firm which has projected the series, an obligation which will be increased with the issue of every succeeding volume."

New Statesman.—"An entertaining library. It provides us with books which illustrate the ways of living and talking and thinking which culminated in the French Revolution."—AFFABLE HAWK.

Nation.—"This new series starts extremely well. You have in these volumes enough to give a strong taste of the eighteenth century to anyone whose French does not allow him to sip from the original. Nor do the excellent editors and translators leave the inquiring reader unguided. They have in each case written an excellent introduction which provides a new-comer with just the facts and signposts he will want and, with what is even more desirable, some stimulus to reflection."—LEONARD WOOLF.

Observer.—"If translation is ever defensible, these three translations can be heartily defended. The translators of Voltaire's *Letters*, Diderot's *Dialogues*, and Crébillon's *Sofa*, are all performers of distinction."—HUMBERT WOLFE.

Yorkshire Post.—"Their new series will be welcome. These admirable volumes set a high standard of production in every department, editorial and technical."

Dialogues. By *Denis Diderot.* Translated by *Francis Birrell*, with an Introduction. 10/6 net.

"Few men who have ever written have better succeeded in expressing their own personalities than he, and few men have been better worth knowing. His geniality, his unfailing faith in human nature, his passionate interest in humanity, his frank, buoyant, boyish enthusiasm shine from every page of these *Dialogues* rendered into English with admirable verve and fidelity."—SUNDAY TIMES.

"A sound and admirable piece of work which may be commended without reserve even to those familiar with the French language. His introduction indeed is all too short."—CRITERION.

The Sofa : a Moral Tale. By *Crébillon fils.* Translated by *Bonamy Dobrée*, with an Introduction. 12/6 net.

"Not a book that would be chosen for the prize-giving of a girls' school. But, accepting its amoral convention, how entertaining it is ; how witty; how full of the comic spirit ; and in its satire on human frailties, how wise ! Thanks to the admirable translation, the vivacity and the subtle effects of the original are preserved."—MORNING POST.

"The elegant licentiousness of the story and the light unruffled satire afford both amusement and illumination."—THE TIMES.

Letters of Voltaire and Frederick the Great.

Translated by *Richard Aldington*, with an Introduction. 15/- net.

"His translation is an admirably stylish piece of work. The correspondence is one of the most varied and entertaining of all the great collections of letters ; the light it throws on the personality of both the monarch and the philosopher has fascination enough, but the critical and intellectual matter of the letters is probably of even greater importance."—THE TIMES.

"Intimate outpourings of two of the ablest, vainest and most perfidious men who ever lived. Mr. Aldington has accomplished his work with such admirable fidelity and spirit that the letters read in his version almost as brilliantly as in the original."—SUNDAY TIMES.

Memoirs of the Bastille. By *Latude* and *Linguet.* Translated by *J.* and *S. F. Mills Whitham*, with an Introduction. With 4 plates. 10/6 net.

"Here is a book which is more thrilling and enthralling than any cloak-and-sword novel. A valuable addition to the series."—MORNING POST.

"Latude's account is vivid from first to last ; in all the celebrated fiction treating of escapes there is nothing to beat for excitement his of the Bastille. Latude was in some respects both knave and fool, but he certainly knew how to write . . . . The memoirs are excellently translated and introduced."—TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT.

The Reveries of a Solitary.

By *Jean Jacques Rousseau.* Translated by *John Gould Fletcher*, with an Introduction. With a portrait. 10/6 net.

"Here he took up the story of his life where the *Confessions* leave it. The *Reveries* was Rousseau's last book. It has, perhaps, been neglected, and its translation by Mr. Fletcher is welcome. It is rich in the characteristics and peculiarities which made the son of a Geneva watchmaker such a 'turbulent and disorderly intellectual force' in his day."—DAILY TELEGRAPH.

The Private Life of the Marshal Duc de Richelieu.

Translated by *F. S. Flint*, with an Introduction by *Richard Aldington*. With 4 plates. 10/6 net.

"A classic of alcove strategy."—NEW STATESMAN.

"An amusing and scandalous account of some of the Duke's amorous adventures."—NATION.

"Amazingly and amusingly readable, a strange picture of the licence which was permitted to a 'grand seigneur.'"—DAILY TELEGRAPH.

"He was the most notorious rake of his age, and the *Private Life* is a record of the exploits of a heartless, calculating, and consummate seducer."—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Short Stories of the French Eighteenth Century :

Fortunes in the Fire, by *Crebillon fils ;* A Tale of Felicity, by *Voisenon ;* Arsace and Isménie, by *Montesquieu.* Translated by *Mrs. Wilfrid Jackson*, with Introductions. With 4 plates. 10/6 net.

"This world flowers to perfection in *Fortunes in the Fire* and in a *Tale of Felicity.* Crébillon is perhaps the most famous delineator of this eighteenth-century world, and his wit is perfect of its kind. The Abbe Voisenon's outlook on life was a trifle wider, but he was a man of Crébillon's world, and, though he may say a little more about unhappiness, he says no more about sin than Crébillon."—TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT.

Letters, and Memoirs.

By *the Prince de Ligne.* Translated by *Leigh Ashton*, with an Introduction. With 4 plates. 10/6 net.

"The Prince de Ligne was no fool in the field, and he wrote very agreeably indeed on war, gardening, love, and the history of his own changing times. Above all he was a brilliant eighteenth-century figure, who lived to see Napoleon out. Frivolous as he was, he yet exercises upon us to-day a strong attraction. We have here only a fragment of his work, but it is well chosen. The introduction strikes the right note, and the translation is easy and most graceful."—TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT.

"The portrait is complete in the living quality of its subject's charm. There is little in this volume one could dispense with."—NEW STATESMAN.

Memoirs of a Nun (La Religieuse). By *Denis Diderot* Translated by *Francis Birrell*, with an Introduction. With a portrait, 10/6 net.

"A brilliant episode."—*New Statesman.* "Probably the best of Diderot's writings, *La Religieuse* is written with masterly skill and produces a very remarkable effect, for, though extremely moving, it is permeated by the atmosphere of humour to which it owes its birth. Part of the effect is due to the fine simplicity of its style. The translation is excellent."—*Nation.*

Memoirs of Madame de Pompadour. By her Waiting-Woman, *Madame du Hausset.* Translated by *F. S. Flint*, with an Introduction. With 5 plates. 10/6 net.

"These entertaining memoirs."—*Times.* "An amazing story, the tale of a dazzling career."—*Mask.* "Her account is both interesting to read and valuable as history. These memoirs, saved from destruction by the merest chance, have been found of great value by many writers on Louis XIV and his world. They are just to the personal character of the King himself. They make it possible to understand how a clever, ambitious, intellectual, artistic woman like Mme. de Pompadour could be attached to a man whose minous weaknesses were partly redeemed by kindliness, good taste and good feeling."—*Birmingham Post.*

Memoirs of the Duc de Lauzun. Translated by *C. K. Scott-Moncrieff*, with an Introduction by *Richard Aldington* and Notes by *G. Rutherford.* With 5 plates, 10/6 net.

"This delightful and absorbing book is the product of an experienced and unusually charming man. His story of his amorous adventures is haphazard and transparently spontaneous. His narrative has something of the freshness, incompleteness and essential inconsequence of real life. He allows us to see his character. It is the portrait of a whimsical, impulsive, egocentric, but fundamentally tender and good-hearted man."—*New Statesman.* "The wit and conciseness of the narrative have been enhanced by the translator."—*Life and Letters.*

Joubert's Pensées and Letters. Translated by *H. P. Collins*, with an Introduction. 10/6 net.

"I find in this book many thoughts in which common-sense has become exquisite."—Affable Hawk in *New Statesman.* "He has conferred no small blessing upon all interested in French letters. Joubert shares with La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyere the honours of this peculiarly French form of philosophic writing [the aphorism]. The book has been well translated by Mr. Collins, who has managed to preserve more of the brilliance of style of the original than one had thought possible. He has also written a short but clear Introduction."—*London Mercury.*

VOLUMES JUST PUBLISHED

The Picture of Paris, before and after the Revolution.

By *Louis Sebastien Mercier.* Translated by *Wilfrid and Emily Jackson*, with an Introduction. With 12 plates, 12/6 net.

Mercier was a courageous and enterprising man whose work at first displeased the authorities. Nevertheless his *Picture of Paris* was read all over Europe, and has to-day lost little or nothing or its charm. It is the work of an observer whose outspoken words have exceptional flavour of their own. Mercier wandered through Paris haphazardly, noting down his impressions, sketching a portrait of abbé, bishop, bourgeois, or man of letters, remarking on the work of the police, the government, or the public executioner. In this way he paints a living portrait of the Paris of his day, an inexhaustible history of the City's manners and morals.

The Adventures of Zeloide and Amanzarifdine,

and Other Tales. By *Paradis de Moncrif.* Translated by *C. K. Scott-Moncrieff*, with an Introduction. 10/6 net.

These fairy tales by Paradis de Moncrif (1687-1770) of the French Academy, ably translated by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff, retain to-day the glitter with which they shone on their first publication. The Introduction gives an account of Moncrif's life at the Court of Louis XV and contrasts it with the lives of some of his Scottish kinsmen.

NEARLY READY

Letters of Mlle de Lespinasse, to and from the Comte de Guibert. Translated by *E. H. F. Mills*, with an Introduction. With 4 plates, about 21/- net.

The letters of Mlle de Lespinasse to the Comte de Guibert are here translated for the first time in their entirety into English. No more vivid portrayal of a woman's emotions can be found than these letters of the leader of one of the most brilliant of Parisian salons. Sincerity is the keynote of the book. These letters lay bare her inmost thoughts. They also give a vivid sketch of French society in the years 1773-1776. Literature, art, music, politics, all find their place.

Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay. Translated by *Mrs. E. G. Allingham*, with an Introduction. With 4 plates, about 12/6 net.

Madame d'Epinay, whose *Memoirs* have so far lain on the top shelf of history, should in this age of self-revelation come into her own. No modern diarists have outrivalled this dainty eighteenth-century miniaturist in words. Her book is a perfect chronicle of the period viewed through a woman's eyes. As upon a screen she throws her scenes—the tête-à-tête, the family party, the dinner party at the house of a famous actress; she recites from memory the conversations heard; she recalls vividly to life Duclos, Rousseau, Grimm, Diderot and many another. She reveals a code of morals and a state of mental striving in an age as big with psychological changes and problems as our own.

VOLUMES IN PREPARATION

Memoirs of Marmontel. Translated by *Briget Patmore*, with an Introduction.

Letters of Voltaire and Madame du Deffand. Translated by *Richard Aldington*, with an Introduction.

Royal Prisoners of the Revolution. Translated by *Maud Stawell*. With an Introduction by *Richard Aldington.*

Adventures of a Man of Quality in England. By the *Abbé Prevost*. Translated by *Dr. Mysie Robertson*, with an Introduction.

Memoirs of Madame de Staal-Delaunay. Translated by *Raymond Mortimer*, with an Introduction.

The September Massacres of 1792. Translated by *Ralph Partridge*, with an Introduction.

Man the Machine and Other Philosophical Pieces. By *Julien de la Mettrie*. Translated by *Harold Monro*, with an Introduction.

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD., LONDON, E.C.4.